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ABSTRACT

This report presents a description of the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) program. RESAs are organizations established to provide a range of educational services on a regional basis by combining some of the educational resources flowing to existing agencies. Funds for RESAs may come from federal, state, or local sources, but in all cases they come through existing agencies; RESAs do not have the authority to levy taxes. This report examines the organization and operation of 23 RESAs, of which 22 have received grants or contracts from the ARC. The report is based on data gathered from two sets of telephone interviews with the 23 RESA directors, face-to-face interviews with staff members at 11 of the 23 RESAs, and additional materials provided by RESA directors and staff members. Individual chapters focus in turn on RESA funding sources, legislative and administrative guidelines governing RESAs, organizational characteristics of RESAs, relationships between RESAs and other educational agencies, planning and implementation of RESA activities, programs and projects of RESAs, objectives of RESAs, and decisions concerning the continuation and expansion of the ARC's RESA program. (JG)

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Report on Regional Education Service Agencies in Appalachia

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents a description of the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) program.

RESAs are organizations established to provide a range of educational services on a regional basis. Each RESA has a Board of Directors to provide policy directions, an executive to administer the organization and its programs, and a staff to provide services to local agencies and area residents.

The RESA acts as a mechanism to offer services on a regional basis by combining some of the education resources flowing to existing agencies. The funds may come directly from federal, state or local sources, but in all cases, the funds come through existing agencies. Individual residents may reimburse a RESA for some service, but within Appalachia, RESAs do not have the authority to levy taxes.

The RESA programs either affect existing education activities of the local education agencies (LEAs) or create new ones. For example, some RESA programs involve the establishment of a resource center to provide technical assistance and materials to the existing classroom teachers. One LEA may not have sufficient demand to utilize such a resource center on a full time basis, but several districts would. Consequently, a regionalized service is more efficient. In other programs, such as providing special classes for the deaf, the RESA hires teachers and delivers services to the students. The RESA actually operates the program.

When organized mainly by local agencies, a RESA is an institution created by them to provide services that the agency representatives deem appropriate. In those cases, it is similar to a third party contractor, owned and controlled through the cooperative efforts of the local agencies.

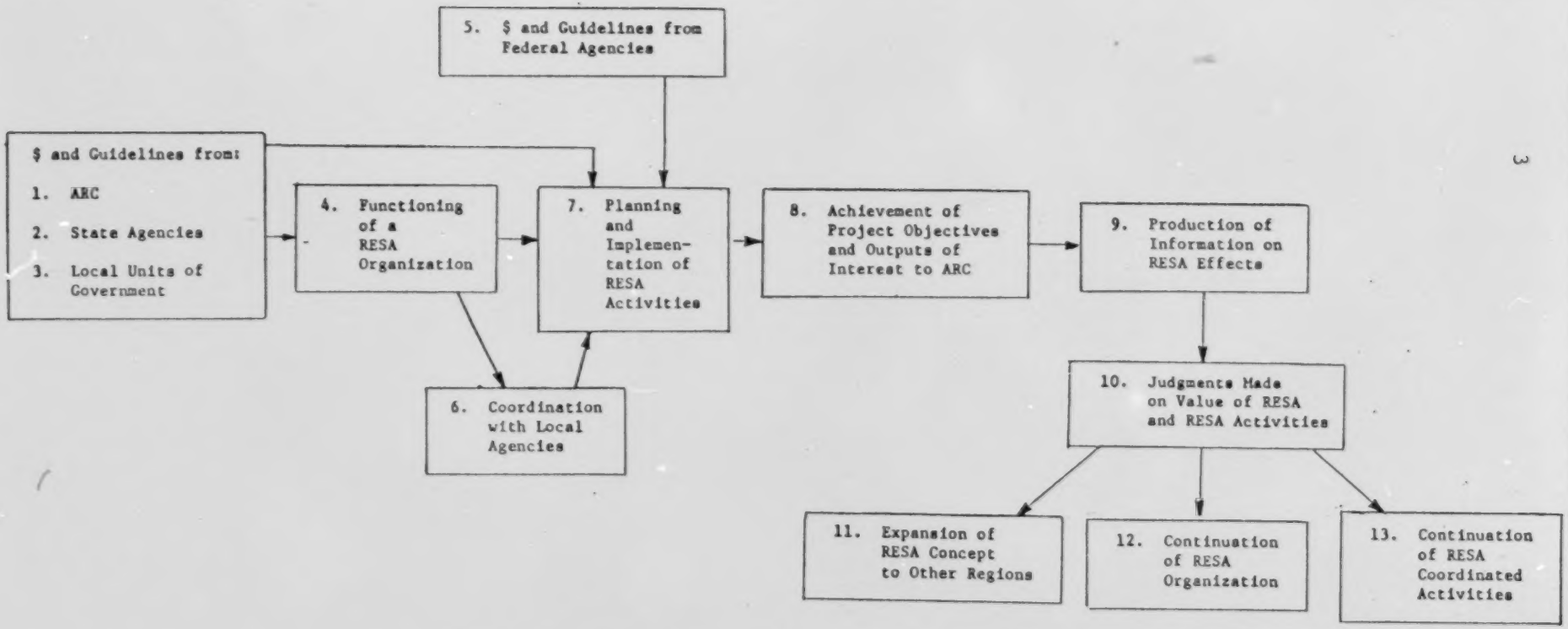
A model of ARC's RESA program was derived from early interviews with ARC, RESA directors and state level education personnel, and from some program materials. That model, originally presented in "Summary of the Plan for the Evaluation of Regional Education Service Agencies," November 26, 1975, is presented here as Figure 1 and has been used as a framework to describe the program and the ARC-assisted RESAs.

The ARC-assisted RESAs are those that have received grants or contracts under Section 302-B of the ARC Code. Twenty-two such RESAs have been identified and examined in this study. One additional RESA was included in the analysis also, since it is frequently associated with the ARC-assisted RESAs. The full set of 23 RESAs studied is listed in the Attachment to this document.

As the ARC-assisted RESAs have evolved, they have exhibited extensive variability in how they have carried out the events in the model or in the outcomes that have been realized for the events. In this document the ARC-assisted RESAs are described by identifying the major variations that have been realized for each event in the model. The variations that are described have been selected because they appear to affect subsequent events, are thought to be critical by persons associated with RESAs, or are related to questions raised by ARC in the Request for Proposal (RFP) for this study.

The extent to which the variation in one event affects subsequent events is discussed in "Supporting Analyses for an Assessment of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Regional Education Service Agencies Program."[1]

1. John D. Waller, Dona M. Kemp, and John W. Scanlon. Paper 5048-4-02, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, August 16, 1976.


5. $ and Guidelines from Federal Agencies
$ and Guidelines from:
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2. State Agencies
3. Local Units of Government
4. Functioning of a RESA Organization
7. Planning and Implementation of RESA Activities
8. Achievement of Project Objectives and Outputs of Interest to ARC
9. Production of Information on RESA Effects
6. Coordination with Local Agencies
10. Judgments Made on Value of RESA and RESA Activities
11. Expansion of RESA Concept to Other Regions
12. Continuation of RESA Organization
13. Continuation of RESA Coordinated Activities

FIGURE 1: MODEL OF THE ARC RESA PROGRAM DERIVED FROM INTERVIEWS AND PROGRAM MATERIALS

The questions raised by ARC in the Request for Proposal for this study are addressed further in that report also.

The information presented here is organized according to the model of the RESA programs given in Figure 1. The model represents a series of sequential events (indicated by boxes in Figure 1) associated with the initiation and continued operation of RESAs. Events 1, 2, 3, and 5 are discussed in two chapters in this report. Sources of funding from ARC, state agencies, local units of government, and federal agencies are covered in Chapter II. State legislative and administrative guidelines and ARC guidelines are covered in Chapter III. The variations that appear to categorize the organizational characteristics of RESAs, Event 4, are discussed in Chapter IV. Chapter V describes the relationships RESAs have established with agencies planning or providing educational services (Event 6). Event 7, the planning and implementation of RESA activities, is discussed in Chapters VI and VII. Chapter VIII discusses RESA and ARC objectives and the type of information produced on the achievement of RESA objectives (Events 8 and 9). In Chapter IX the effects that judgments on RESAs and RESA activities have on the expansion of RESAs to new regions, the continuation of individual RESAs, and the continuation of RESA coordinated activities (Events 10, 11, 12, and 13) are discussed. Concluding comments are presented in Chapter X.

The description in this report is based on two sets of telephone interviews with RESA directors in the 23 RESAs identified in Attachment A, documentation provided by those directors, additional interviews with RESA directors and their staffs during site visits to 11 of those RESAs, and additional materials provided by program directors during the site visits. In the report, specific RESAs are identified by the cities in which they are located.

II. FUNDING OF RESAS

This chapter addresses questions concerning the funding of RESAs. Topics covered include: source of funds, trends through time, administrative costs, and costs of initiating a RESA.

A. SOURCE OF FUNDS

There are four general sources of funds utilized to support RESAs and the activities in which they become involved:

- o Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC),
- o other federal agencies,
- o state agencies, and
- o Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

Table 1 presents the current budgets and the percentage of funding obtained from each source, as reported by ten of the 23 RESAs studied. The entries in the table demonstrate the considerable variation that exists in the utilization of the four sources, as well as the variation in the total budget size.

Major factors which affect the distribution are:

- o Availability of funds: Some RESAs have access to state or federal funds due to policy level decisions made at the state level to utilize the RESAs to perform selected functions. The lack of such commitment in other states essentially precludes RESA access to similar funding. As discussed later, these policy decisions are the result of a variety of factors, including the personal beliefs of senior state officials that RESAs are effective.

TABLE 1: CURRENT FUNDING SOURCES FOR RESAs*

		Percent of Budget from:					
		ARC	Other Federal	State	Local Education Agencies	Other	Total Budget
Ala.	Huntsville	6	52	17	25	0	$ 219,599
Ky.	Ashland						
	Barbourville						
	Hazard	53	0	27	20	0	$ 631,344
	Morehead						
	Prestonburg						
Md.	Cumberland	59	16	4	21	0	$1,038,642
Miss.	New Albany	31	28	4	35	2	$ 181,993
N.C.	Canton	0	30	65	5	0	$ 434,323
	N. Wilkesboro						
Ohio	Athens						
	Mt. Orab						
	Piketon	68	0	0	32	0	$ 56,084
	St. Clairsville	75	0	0	25	0	$ 45,000
S.C.	Greenville						
Tenn.	Alcoa						
	Cookeville	19	71	2	8	0	$ 170,191
	Harrogate						
	Johnson City						
	Oak Ridge	7	23	7	63	0	$ 495,230
Va.	Norton						
W.Va.	Martinsburg						
	Morgantown	0	12	58	30	0	$ 263,487

*Sources: FY 76 budget provided by RESA director. In some cases, funds coming through a state agency are from federal sources, but are not distinguished as such in the RESA budget.

- o Local policy decisions on functions given to RESAs by local education agencies: The functions that are given to a RESA are heavily dependent upon: existing programs and institutions, priorities of local school systems and attitudes of local superintendents on who should control what programs. Thus, while one RESA may be encouraged to organize and operate an ongoing teaching program (e.g. driver education) for LEAs, others are discouraged from actually operating such programs. As RESAs operate programs for LEAs on a contract basis, local input to RESA budgets increases. When they do not become involved in such programs, local input generally is low.

- o Capability to obtain federal grants: The capability to obtain federal grants is a function of the grant writing capability of the staff, existence of federal programs to cover needs identified for the region, and luck (in the opinion of some RESA directors).

The variation is also due in part to the characteristics of the four sources of funds. These characteristics, and the problems and benefits associated with each funding source, are discussed in the following sections.

1. ARC SUPPORT

ARC has provided support to RESAs in the form of:

- o contracts for planning and operations, and
- o grants or contracts for specific programs.

The planning and operation grants have been awarded primarily under section 302-B of the ARC Code. Under conditions outlined in the 1970 and 1974 editions of the code, a first year's grant can be used for 75 percent of "actual and reasonable" costs of planning and initiating RESA activities. Grants in the next four years may cover respectively 90 percent, 75 percent, 50 percent, and 25 percent of operating costs incurred in the first year after planning. (This funding policy has been modified in the 1976 ARC Code.)

The program-specific support is much the same as that received under other federal programs, and therefore is discussed later along with other types of federal support for RESA activities. This section focuses on ARC general support for planning and operations, and covers:

- Extent to which RESAs utilize available ARC support,
- RESA reactions to reduction in ARC support,
- Benefits of ARC support, and
- Problems associated with ARC support.

a. Extent to Which RESAs Utilize Available ARC Support

Many RESAs have evolved from organizations that existed prior to the award of ARC funds. Typically, such organizations existed to provide regional coordination of specific educational programs, such as programs funded under Title III ESEA. As the original sources of support declined, the availability of ARC support allowed these organizations to continue program activities and, moreover, led to programs in other educational areas.

In at least three regions, the education planning component of a Local Development District (LDD) reconstituted itself as a RESA with the receipt of funding under the ARC RESA program.

In other regions, superintendents had been meeting informally to discuss issues of mutual interest. The availability of ARC funding led them to formalize their meetings into an ongoing organization. In a few regions, there had been no regional educational activity, and the possibility of ARC support led local superintendents or a state organization to establish a RESA structure.

Of the 22 RESAs which ARC has assisted with 302-B funds, 8 were still receiving those funds during the 1975-76 school year. The remaining 14 have completed the full five-year funding cycle or have terminated assistance early. All of the RESAs in Kentucky terminated ARC funding prior to completing the full five-year funding cycle when state funding became available. The reasons given for early termination by the Kentucky

RESAs was, by making use of available state support, they could have a greater role in coordinating the delivery of state services as well as greater financial security.[1] The remaining RESAs still receive general administrative and operating support from ARC, and new ones are to be supported in FY 77.

b. RESA Reactions to Reduction in ARC Support

Although many RESA directors claimed that the gradual reduction in ARC funding created financial pressures on them, no RESA that received an operating grant from ARC had folded as of January 1976. There are three main ways used to replace the funding from ARC:

(1) Local School Districts Are Requested to Contribute Funds: For example, in the Huntsville, Alabama RESA, each school system contributed a flat fee of $500 plus $.50 per pupil.

(2) RESA Directors Include Part of Their Salaries in Each Federal Grant They Obtain: This is done, for example, in the Norton, Virginia RESA. There, the RESA director makes sure he spends part of his time working on each federally funded program to justify the contributions they make to his salary.

(3) State Departments of Education Provide Increased Support: Kentucky, North Carolina and West Virginia all established programs in recent years to provide operating support to RESAs.

c. Benefits of ARC Support

The RESA directors identified one primary benefit of the availability of direct ARC support: flexibility. The ARC funding has enabled

1. Subsequent events have showed this may have been a temporary condition for the Kentucky RESAs. See Section E of Chapter III.

RESA directors, their staffs, and local educators to spend at least a year planning and subsequently to carry out programs desired in the region. Most other sources of funding are accompanied by restrictions on the programmatic activities for which they may be used.

d. Problems Associated with ARC Support

Several RESA directors felt that the schedule of decreasing ARC support tended to hurt the RESAs. The RESA concept was so new that local superintendents and Boards of Education needed several years of participation before they would be willing to support the RESA with local funds.

The fixed decreasing support schedule has another drawback, according to RESA directors. Even if they can find sources to replace the dollars lost, these sources generally are tied to specific activities or services; thus, the RESA loses the freedom and the time needed to develop new services or activities.

2. OTHER FEDERAL SUPPORT

Based on available data presented in Table 1, about 73 percent of the ARC-assisted RESAs currently receive federal funds other than the ARC 302-B grants. This funding can come either directly to a RESA or through existing state or local education agencies, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The principal sources of the federal funds discussed in this section are:

- ESEA Titles II, III, IV, and VI,
- ARC 211 and 202 funds, and
- Highway Safety Act.

These funds are always designated for specific program activities.

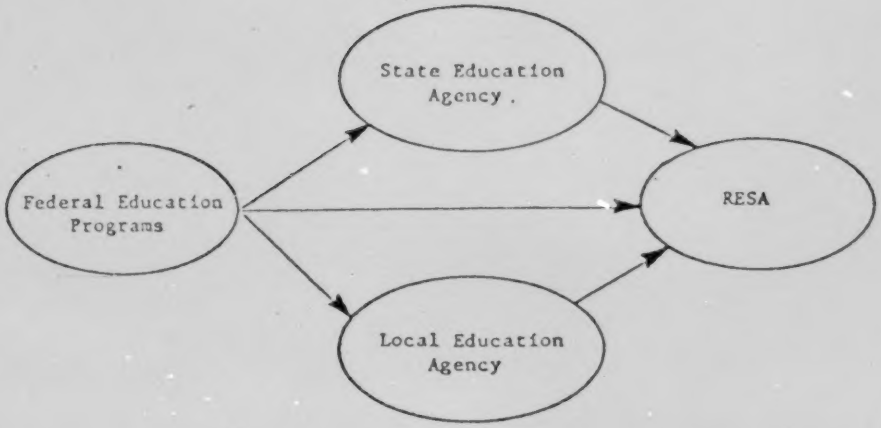


FIGURE 2

METHODS OF OBTAINING FEDERAL FUNDING

The rest of this section will discuss the success RESAs have had in obtaining federal funds, the types of programs those funds support, and the benefits and problems RESA directors associated with the use of such funds. This issue is also addressed in "An Assessment of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Regional Education Service Agencies Program." [1]

a. RESA Success in Obtaining Federal Funds

By far the greatest amount of programmatic federal funding comes to the RESAs through the state agencies. That is to say, the State Department of Education is the recipient of a federal grant, and some part of these funds is given to the RESA. The competition faced by the RESA in such situations is less than in obtaining federal grants directly from a federal agency, and frequently is nonexistent.

1. John D. Waller, Dona M. Kemp, and John W. Scanlon, Paper 5048-5, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, July 27, 1976.

As an example of this type of funding, the Kentucky State Department of Education at one time developed a plan assuring each school district a proportional amount of the available Title IV funds. For those school districts belonging to a RESA, the funds would go directly to the RESA.

The success of RESAs at obtaining direct federal grants has been mixed, at best. Several RESAs have obtained such grants and used them to conduct significant programs, but only occasionally do the dollar amounts make up a major part of the RESA budget. The Norton, Virginia RESA, which has received as much as $800,000 worth of grants in one year, is an exceptional case. Several RESAs have never received a direct federal program grant. Some currently have a policy of not applying; others have stopped applying after several rejections of earlier applications.

Finally, the reception of federal funds coming through the local education agencies depends upon decisions by the local superintendents and Boards. This situation will be covered below in the section on local funding.

b. Programs Supported by Federal Funds

We obtained information on program types during site visits to selected RESAs. In those 11 RESAs we visited, federal grants support programs ranging from early childhood education to nutrition for the elderly, from assistance to severely handicapped children to special help for talented and gifted children. Table 2 shows, for ten of the eleven RESAs visited, the types of program being supported with federal funds. These funds often come through a state agency and in some RESA budgets are designated as state funds.

c. Benefits of Using Direct Federal Program Grants

RESA directors cited four major benefits from using federal program support:

	RESA	Appalachian Education Satellite Project	Special Education	Parent Education	Health Education	Management and Administration	Early Childhood Education	Aging	Safety Education	Vocational Education
Huntsville	1	✓	✓	✓						
Cumberland	2	✓		✓	✓	✓				
Alcoa	3		✓							✓
Morehead	4		✓				✓	✓		
Norton	5	✓	✓							
Greenville	6		✓			✓				
New Albany	7		✓				✓			
Martinsburg	8			✓						
Canton	9		✓			✓			✓	
Oak Ridge	10		✓							

TABLE 2: RESA PROGRAMS SUPPORTED WITH FEDERAL FUNDS

- o They allow a program to be started without a large initial outlay from local funds.
- o If a program turns out to be undesirable, it is easily eliminated by not requesting renewal of the grant.
- o Federal grants provide access to national level expertise, models, etc.
- o They bring additional resources into the region.

d. Problems Associated with Using Federal Program Grants

Three major problems with using federal program grants were cited by the RESA directors. The first one was mentioned as particularly severe.

- o The types of program activities for which funds are available do not coincide with local desires or needs.
- o Lack of funding continuity results in burdens on local education agencies and sometimes an inability to continue the service.
- o They are difficult to obtain.

3. STATE SUPPORT

Appalachian states have provided support to RESAs in the form of:

- o program specific funds, and
- o funds for planning and operation.

This section discusses each of those forms of support. The benefits and problems that RESA directors associate with state support are discussed also.

a. Program Specific Support

This type of state support is for services such as implementing a state Right to Read Program, initiating a new activity (e.g. kindergarten), and providing consultative services in specific areas.

State funds for specific programs or projects go either: (1) directly to the RESA or (2) to the participating local education agencies who in turn make them available to the RESA. The RESAs in Tennessee and Ohio have to depend on the second approach to receiving state funds, since some state agencies have made it clear that funds will be awarded only to local school districts. Other states, in particular Kentucky, North Carolina, and West Virginia, have utilized both approaches.

b. General Operating Funds

In the states of Kentucky, North Carolina and West Virginia, the State Legislatures or Departments of Education have allocated funds to operate RESAs and to enable them to deliver services deemed appropriate by local education agencies. The use of general operating funds in Kentucky is discussed here as an example of this type of support.

In Kentucky the average amount awarded to RESAs in FY 76 for such purposes has been approximately $60,000.[1] These funds are intended to cover such administrative costs as the salaries and expenses of an executive director, an administrative assistant, a secretary and a staff person to provide consulting services in a specific area selected by the RESA. The state supported staff are expected to spend about half of their time acting as liaison between the local education agencies and the State Department of Education, and coordinating state services for local school districts. The other half of their time is to be spent responding to local needs and interests. In general, the North Carolina state support is for an administrator and specific state employees and programs. In West Virginia, the RESAs are provided with funds to hire staff in selected program areas.

1. Kentucky will change its procedures in July. See Section E of Chapter III.

c. Benefits of Using State Support

RESA directors identified four benefits associated with receiving financial support from their states:

- The services became institutionalized.
- The direct involvement of the RESA in delivery of state services makes those services more accessible to local school districts than when they are provided only from a distant state capital.
- Direct payment of state funds to a RESA provides the RESA with more freedom in spending those funds than if the money comes through individual school districts who are free to withdraw their support if they object to the RESA's activities.
- State administrative support gives financial stability to the RESA.

d. Problems Associated with Using State Support

Two problems were identified by RESA directors:

- The danger that the RESA would become another level of bureaucracy in the state.
- There is a potential problem that state bureaus will want RESAs to assume a regulatory role. RESA directors fear they will lose the support of the local superintendents if they assume this role.

4. LOCAL SUPPORT

Local school districts also support RESAs with general operating funds and funds for specific programs or services. The following sections describe how local support is delivered and the size of that support.

a. Methods of Obtaining Local School District Financial Support

Local support is provided as cash or in-kind on a basis of:

- o a flat fee per participating local agency;
- o a per student assessment; or
- o a purchase order basis.

Some RESAs utilize only one of these funding options, while other RESAs have used various combinations of the options.

At least two RESAs use the flat fee approach. Participants in the New Albany, Mississippi RESA each contribute $1,200 annually for the general support of the RESA. The Cumberland, Maryland RESA assesses all members a flat fee of $7,600, plus a charge of $.50 per pupil to the LEAs, calculated on the basis of the number of students enrolled.

The most common method of obtaining local funds is through an assessment to LEAs based on the size of their student population. In the 11 RESAs visited, the per student cost ranges from $.25 per student to $1.00 per student. In at least four of these seven, the assessment is on all member education systems and the revenues are used for general purposes and administrative expenses. In many RESAs, assessments for specific services are placed on those agencies utilizing the service.

Some of the services provided by RESAs are on a cost reimbursement basis. Examples are the application of a per participant cost for inservice workshops or charging a per student fee for a course provided by the RESA. Normally, the service fee is designed to cover a portion of the direct cost of the delivery of the service. However, at least one RESA adds on an overhead fee (currently 12 percent of the cost).

b. Relative Size of Local Contributions

The local contributions to support RESAs usually account for a small part of a RESA's budget. Only one of the 22 ARC-assisted RESAs receive local funds that account for 50 percent or more of its budget.[1] Most of the RESAs that receive a large percentage of the budget from local sources operate service delivery programs to students. In those cases, the local resources are due to income derived from charges for program participation.

c. The Benefit and the Problem Associated with Local Funding

The major benefit identified with the use of local funds to support a RESA is that the sponsoring agencies tend to become more involved in the operation of the RESA and treat it as their organization. (As indirect support of this contention, several directors whose RESAs do not depend extensively on local funds claimed to have a problem achieving recognition as an integral part of the local education activity.) A problem identified is the limitation on available resources.

B. FUNDING TRENDS OVER TIME

Table 1 presented a static view of the current distribution of RESA support by source. In general, these distributions do not remain constant

1. This discussion is based on the ten budgets presented in Table 1.

from year to year. However, consistent trends of changes in the distributions are not encountered, and many fluctuations appear to be due to factors beyond the control of the RESA.

Table 3 presents the total funds and the percentage provided by the four sources over five to seven year time frames for three RESAs. As can readily be noted, each has a distinct history of funding. The first RESA consistently derives a small percentage of its total budget from ARC, and has experienced varying degrees of local and federal support through the years. The second RESA has exhibited no distinct pattern, with federal and local contributions going up and down over time. The third RESA represents an orderly decrease in ARC funding, with a large allocation of state funds filling the gap. Except for the last year, the RESA has not depended upon local funds, and even now the contribution is small.

The three RESA budget histories in Table 3 demonstrate that a variety of trends are evident in RESA funding. Also, even within individual RESAs, consistent trends are not encountered. The combination of Tables 1 and 2 demonstrates that the ARC RESAs have shown that a broad range of funding patterns is feasible. Furthermore, except for local preferences, there is little evidence to suggest that one pattern is universally superior to the others.

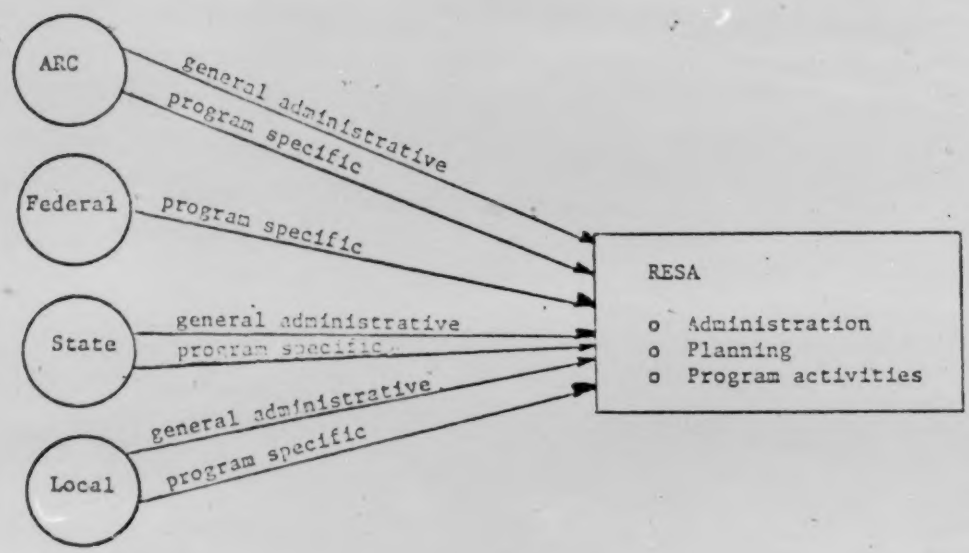
C. ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING

Financial support for the RESA can be for general administrative purposes or can be earmarked for specific program activities, as illustrated in Figure 3.

TABLE 3: THREE EXAMPLES
OF THE DISTRIBUTION
OF RESA FUNDING
THROUGH TIME

RESA	Year of Planning or Operation	Percent of funding from: ARC	Other Federal	State	Local	Total Funds
Number I	1	0	82	0	18	$436,962
	2	9	39	9	43	268,531
	3	3	30	0.2	67	196,599
	4	3	56	10	31	616,330
	5	11	26	21	42	598,828
	6	11	27	13	49	587,721
	7	7	23	7	63	495,230
Number II	1	20	37	17	26	283,462
	2	32	14	0.1	54	328,984
	3	9	39	5	47	302,299
	4	0	12	58	30	263,487
Number III	1	100	0	0	0	112,000
	2	25	19	56	0	242,144
	3	14	23	63	0	235,027
	4	5	32	63	0	390,754
	5	0	30	65	5	434,323

FIGURE 3
SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT



As illustrated in Figure 3, situations exist in which administrative funds are awarded to RESAs by ARC, state and local agencies independent of program specific funds. Usually, a RESA utilizes, at most, one source for such purposes in a given fiscal year. Federal grants for specific programs may contain funds for administering the programs, but they are not a source of general administrative support.

While some RESA budgets breakout an "administrative" cost category, others do not and, in general, a consistent definition of what constitutes an administrative cost is not utilized.

For example, some RESAs include an administrative budget category cost associated with rent, utilities, and employee benefits, while others do not. When such items are included, the "administrative costs" can increase rapidly as the level of program activity increases, even though

the number of persons performing administrative tasks may not increase. Other RESAs have persons performing program tasks listed under administrative budget headings. Also, some RESAs treat the entire ARC operating contract as an administrative fund, even though specific educational services are to be delivered to local residents under conditions of the contract.

The Kentucky RESAs are provided an average of approximately $60,000 per year to cover administrative costs and at least one service delivery person. However, administrative assistants funded through this allocation also perform service activities such as organizing inservice programs. Executive Directors, too, become directly involved in service delivery, such as coordinating cooperative purchasing programs or overseeing special education projects. Consequently, on paper, "administrative costs" can be reduced essentially to nothing as personnel time is charged directly to projects. For example, the RESA located in Norton, Virginia operates solely on grants, and all costs are direct charges to a project grant.

Using available cost estimates and defining the administrative staff to be the Executive Director, a secretary, one other professional, and associated costs of supporting the activities of these individuals, the average administrative cost for a RESA appears to be around $40,000 to $50,000 per year. Directors have salaries between $15,000 and $25,000, frequently with extensive travel budgets. Rent of facilities frequently is handled as an inkind contribution of a local education system.

Changes that appear to occur through time in this general administrative funding situation are:

- o some regular increase due to general inflation patterns,

- as ARC funding decreases and is not replaced by general state or local support, the second professional and possibly the Executive Director change from administrative to program accounts, and
- as the number of programs directly operated by the RESA increases, program managers begin to perform administrative tasks, even though they may not be budgeted as such.

No evidence was encountered that the basic administrative costs vary significantly between rural and urban settings.

D. COST OF INITIATION OF RESA

The cost of initiating a RESA is a question which the recent ARC experience does little to resolve due to the variety of funding patterns that have been exhibited. Also, there is little basis for deciding what funding constitutes initiation. Therefore, three answers have been developed to accomodate the variety of experience and assumptions relative to the question.

1. INITIATION COSTS EQUIVALENT TO PLANNING COSTS

The ARC strategy in developing RESAs has been to initially provide funds to organize and plan the activities of a regional organization. These planning contracts typically are for one year. However, several have extended over several years. Some planning contracts are awarded to state agencies to organize several RESAs, but most of the contracts are to local organizations. In the initial phase of the ARC RESA program, planning contracts of approximately $90,000 were common. Contracts

made a few years ago were in the $50,000 range, while two awarded during FY 75 were $33,750 and $38,375. Thus, currently the minimum cost to ARC of initiating RESAs, if initiation is equivalent to successful planning, appears to be on the order of $35,000. If local match funds are included, the cost is approximately $50,000. This is a significant decrease from previous costs.

The Alcoa, Tennessee RESA is an example of a RESA that, after initial planning contracts, continued to operate without further ARC support. In that case, the initiation costs were equivalent to planning costs which, for ARC, were $61,650.

The Alcoa, Tennessee and Kentucky RESAs demonstrate that the full five years of ARC funding are not required to initiate a RESA, since they discontinued ARC funding sooner than necessary. Also, as demonstrated in Table 3, some RESAs already had or quickly developed funding from other sources that exceeded the minimum matching requirement for ARC funds. In those cases, it is questionable whether ARC funding was required to establish or continue the operations of the organization. According to ARC records, $424,597 in support was provided to the four Kentucky RESAs over a three year period, for an average of $106,150 per RESA.

2. INITIATION COSTS EQUIVALENT TO THE ARC FUNDING CYCLE

Following the planning of a RESA, ARC has offered up to four years of operational support on a 10, 25, 50, and 75 percent match basis with state or local funds. Many persons argue that these costs represent the true initiation cost of a RESA from ARC's perspective. The arguments are based on the assumption that the existence of such money over an extended

period, with a phased withdrawal, is essential to attract local funds and ensure continued existence independent of ARC.

While cost data were not obtained for all RESAs over all periods of ARC funding, a sample of RESAs that have gone the full funding cycle demonstrate that the ARC cost is in the range of $200,000 to $300,000.

3. INITIATION COSTS EQUIVALENT TO ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Some RESAs' personnel have argued that ARC should cover administrative costs until local school districts or the state can assume the burden. The minimum number of years normally is not specified in such arguments. Thus, using the estimate of $40,000 to $50,000 to cover the cost of administration, an estimate of $45,000 multiplied by the number of years of support required provides an estimate of initiation costs.

In summary, the cost to ARC of initiation ranges from $33,750 to $300,000, depending on the assumptions one wishes to make on what should be included and which RESA experiences should be taken into consideration.

III. GUIDELINES GOVERNING RESA CONDUCT

In addition to the conditions under which funds are supplied, there are varying legal and administrative guidelines which may constrain the actions of RESAs. The three major sources of such guidelines are:

- State legislative authorization,
- State administrative guidelines, and
- ARC program guidelines.

This chapter describes some of the diversity of guidelines and restrictions under which RESAs operate, discusses the compliance of existing RESAs with ARC guidelines, and reports on RESA directors' perceptions of the benefits and problems associated with various legislative situations.

The fundamental message in this chapter seems to be that, ultimately, details of legislative authorizations, restrictions, and guidelines don't matter very much. Instead, something less definable has more impact on what RESAs do: a prevailing attitude, particularly the attitude of the State Department of Education. The final section of this chapter discusses this issue in more detail.

A. STATE LEGISLATIVE AUTHORIZATION

In no case does existing legislation in the Appalachian states studied (all except New York and Pennsylvania) require either a state agency or local education associations to establish or support RESAs. Nor, in any of those

states, do the RESAs have the capability to raise revenues by taxation or even by having taxes levied specifically for them.

There is considerable variation from state to state on what legal status RESAs may have, if they are established. At least four different situations can currently be recognized:

- There may be specific legislation authorizing RESAs as legal entities (Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia).
- There may be legislation authorizing the combination of local governmental services, although not mentioning RESA-type organizations specifically (Kentucky, Alabama).
- The RESAs may be incorporated as a part of the State Department of Education (North Carolina).
- There may be no authorizing or enabling legislation (Ohio, Mississippi, South Carolina).

Each of these situations will be described now in more detail.

1. SPECIFIC AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

In four states--Maryland, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, there is legislation authorizing the establishment of RESAs and setting up criteria for their recognition. RESAs are enabled to enter into contractual agreements with public and private agencies. The legislation in Tennessee and Virginia specifies the composition of the RESA Board of Directors; in Virginia and West Virginia, the Boards' powers and responsibilities are cited.

The Tennessee legislation is cited as prohibiting RESAs from receiving state funds directly. The other three states permit the state to provide funds to RESAs, but in fact they do not provide any.

It should be noted that, although the RESAs in these states are currently governed by specific legislation, they were not necessarily

established under such legislation. On the contrary, in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia the RESAs existed before the legislation was passed. In Virginia, for example, the director of the Norton RESA actively campaigned for passage of the legislation. It is not clear what authorization existed at the time each RESA was established. In fact, it is sometimes hard to say just when the RESA was actually established since, as discussed in the previous chapter, some of the RESAs developed out of existing organizations.

2. NON-SPECIFIC AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

In two states, Kentucky and Alabama, the RESAs exist as legal entities on the basis of legislation not specifically related to regional education associations.

Kentucky

In Kentucky, there is legislation authorizing the combination of services by public agencies. Using this legislation, the State Department of Education became involved in organizing, funding, and administering a statewide network of RESAs. This had led to considerable organizational and functional similarity among the Kentucky RESAs.

Alabama

Existing state legislation has been interpreted in such a way that independent RESAs, capable of receiving and expending public funds, can be established. The Alabama RESA has achieved legal standing similar to the Maryland RESA and, legally, is more independent from existing institutions than the RESAs in Virginia, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

3. COMPONENTS OF STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Although the Kentucky Department of Education was active in establishing RESAs, the resulting agencies are legally independent of the Department.

North Carolina, by contrast, has kept the RESAs as components of the state Department. RESA directors, for example, are state employees.

The actual legal status of the RESAs in North Carolina is nevertheless somewhat unclear. Technically, the legislature approved geographic boundaries for education service regions in the state, so that all state education services tend to be administered on a regional basis. In some of those regions, RESAs have been established. The legislature has approved Department of Education budgets allocating funds to the RESAs --thus providing at least a tacit authorization of their existence.

4. NO AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

In Ohio, Mississippi, and South Carolina there apparently is no legislation authorizing the establishment of RESAs as legal entities. In Ohio, in fact, such legislation has been specifically rejected.

In these states, another existing agency must act as fiscal agent and as official employer of the RESA staff. In Ohio, local school districts are used. The New Albany, Mississippi RESA uses a junior college --to avoid being identified with a single district. The RESA in South Carolina is a component of a Council of Governments.

B. STATE ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

Only two states, Kentucky and West Virginia, have developed and promulgated official administrative guidelines specifically for RESAs.

- Kentucky

  The State Department of Education has published a lengthy procedures manual, covering many organizational, fiscal, and personnel issues.

- West Virginia

  The legislation in West Virginia authorizing the establishment of RESAs also empowers the state Board of Education to establish rules and regulations governing their operation. The rules so established have been incorporated into a legislative "Resolution of Establishment for Regional Education Service Agencies."

The RESAs in North Carolina also have a specific set of regulations governing their operations; since they are considered components of the state Department of Education, they are governed by the Department's rules.

In these three states--Kentucky, West Virginia, and North Carolina --there is also a mechanism for continuing guidance from the state, in the form of biweekly or monthly meetings involving the RESA directors and staff members of the Department of Education.

In the other seven states, the only state regulations governing RESAs appear to be those governing the delivery of education services (which apply to the participating school districts) and those governing any legal entity.

It is interesting to note that the existence of state regulations for RESAs is not related to the existence of specific legislation authorizing RESAs. Kentucky has not specifically authorized RESAs, but regulates them; Maryland,[1] Tennessee, and Virginia authorize them but have not documented regulations governing them.

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1. The Cumberland, Maryland RESA is governed by a "Basic Agreement Document," which it prepared in response to the authorizing legislation, and which has been signed by the Attorney General of Maryland. Presumably, however, each RESA established under the legislation would not be bound by this document.

C. BENEFITS AND PROBLEMS CAUSED BY STATE LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

When RESA directors were asked if they would like to see any changes in legislation in their states with regard to RESAs, eleven answered "yes," eight answered "no," and four did not respond. The changes desired by the directors were:

- o Establishment of enabling legislation,
- o Direct state funding, and
- o Ability to act as own fiscal agent.

Enabling legislation is seen, to a great extent, as a means of accomplishing the other two changes. Specifically, the benefits associated with having state enabling legislation were:

- o Reception of direct state financial support,
- o Ability to act as own fiscal agent, and
- o Recognition or stature associated with legitimization.

(It is interesting that receipt of state financial support was often identified as a benefit of state legislation, even though none of the RESAs in states with RESA-specific legislation receive state financial support for general administrative expenses.)

All RESA directors were asked if existing legislation or rules had prevented them from doing anything they had attempted or wished to try. Fifteen answered "no," five answered "yes," and answers were not obtained from three. Only two of the directors identified restrictions affecting programs or activities. In Mississippi, school districts are restricted from cooperative purchasing agreements, and in Tennessee one RESA was unable to operate a mobile kindergarten due to space requirements established

for classes. The remainder of the problems involved the inability to be a fiscal agent or the lack of direct funding from the state.

D. ARC GUIDELINES

The general guidance provided by ARC is contained in the Commission Code, Section 302-B-8.2, September 1974. The code indicates that a RESA receiving a contract should:

- Be controlled by a Board of Directors representative of local school districts and human resource agencies, with members elected directly or appointed by popularly elected officials.
- Have a staff director appointed by and responsible to the Board;
- Achieve specific education purposes (improve quality of planning and services, quality and quantity of teachers, improve early childhood education, occupational information), or achieve ARC's education priorities; and
- Be a legal entity able to receive funds, etc.

The first three guidelines have been met at least in part by all RESAs; the fourth has been met by ten of the twenty-three RESAs. Each of the guidelines is discussed briefly below.

Board of Directors: All RESAs have Boards of Directors; however, the requirements for representation of non-education organizations is not met in at least eleven RESAs. The extent to which the Boards are appointed by popularly elected officials is questionable, since in most cases superintendents are automatically appointed (and in some cases the superintendents or local school boards are not elected).

Staff Director: All RESAs have Executive Directors responsible to Boards. Some Boards share that responsibility with the State Department of Education.

Purpose: This guideline is quite broad and has resulted in a broad spectrum of activities. However, each RESA meets it by engaging in an activity in at least one area identified by ARC.

Legal Entity: This requirement has been met by only ten of the ARC-assisted RESAs. Five additional RESAs, in Tennessee, are legal entities but are prohibited by legislation from receiving state funds.

E. SIGNIFICANCE OF LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

Despite the great diversity of legislative and regulatory provisions in the various states, RESAs have been established and, moreover, tend to look somewhat alike from state to state. It is true that the absence of legislative support appears to be a major concern of many RESA directors, but the evidence does not tend to support this concern. Where there was a desire to establish and maintain RESAs, a way has been found to do so; in the absence of such desire, the legislation has not necessarily produced RESAs. Moreover, the existence of legislation has not brought one of the major benefits expected by those who don't have it, namely direct state financial support.

A more important factor in the establishment and support of RESAs is the attitude in the state toward the concept, and particularly the attitude of the state Department of Education. This assertion is difficult to document, since it is hard to measure "attitude" precisely, but it is a definite impression one gets from studying the history of RESAs in various states. Kentucky provides perhaps the clearest example. RESAs were established and official regulations governing their operations were promulgated, despite the lack of specific authorizing legislation. Several Kentucky RESAs even terminated their use of ARC support earlier than necessary, because of the attitude of support for RESAs coming from the Department of Education. Then, when a new

State Superintendent, specifically opposed to the RESA concept, recently was elected, the Department of Education support for RESAs changed dramatically--although no change in the legislation or regulations occurred --and state funding has been eliminated.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESAS

This chapter looks at the administrative and institutional characteristics of ARC-assisted RESAs. The presentation helps answer the questions posed by ARC related to how the RESAs have established a mechanism for providing regional services.

All ARC-assisted RESAs have a similar administrative structure, consisting of a Board of Directors, an Executive Director, and a staff which coordinates activities under the Director. Variation occurs in the types of person filling these positions, how they operate, and how they relate to other existing institutions. But the factors that appear to categorize RESA organizational characteristics most clearly are:

- o The composition and responsibilities of the Board,
- o The fiscal relationship of the RESA with other institutions, and
- o Administrative status of staff.

A. COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

All RESAs have Boards of Directors which act as the primary policy and decision makers for the RESA. The composition of those Boards and the specific tasks they perform are discussed in this section.

1. COMPOSITION

All RESA Boards contain local superintendents, and most are dominated by them. Still, more than half of them also contain representation from

other organizations. A distribution of the current membership of RESA boards is given in Table 4.

Many RESA directors expressed to us the need to have school superintendents represented on the Board if the RESA is to function in and through local education agencies. Those directors emphasized the fact that the RESA's primary purpose is to serve school districts. The superintendents are the main users of the RESA services and evidently feel the need to control the organization.

At the same time, many directors said it was important for the RESA Board to be a mechanism for coordination among social service agencies. Therefore, participation by representatives of those agencies is also believed to be important.

2. ROLE OF THE BOARD

All RESA Boards perform these specific tasks:

- o Hire the Executive Director,
- o Propose and approve activities and projects to be considered or undertaken,
- o Approve budgets, and
- o Provide evaluative information to the RESA director on the performance of the RESA staff and activities.

The extent to which RESA Boards exercise sole responsibility for these tasks varies between RESAs. Three distinct variations exist:

Responsibility Shared with the State Department of Education: For those RESAs receiving general purpose funds from the state, the State Department of Education exercises policy and decision-making control in coordination with the Board. For example, Boards in Kentucky perform the initial selection of an Executive Director with the final decision being reserved for the state superintendent.

RESA Board as Advisor to Another Board: For a RESA operating through an LDD (only Greenville, South Carolina at present), the Board is actually

TABLE 4: COMPOSITION OF RESA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Location of RESA		Total Size of Board	Local Education Association Superintendents	Local Education Association Board Members	Representatives of Higher Education Institutions	LDD Representatives	State Level Personnel	Social Service Agency Representatives	Other
Ala.	Huntsville	9	8	---	---	---	1	---	
Ky.	Ashland	16	9	---	3	1	1	2	
	Barbourville	24	16	---	5	1	1	1	
	Morehead	16	11	---	3	2	---	---	---
	Hazard	18	11	---	4	1	1	1	
	Prestonburg	15	7	---	4	1	1	2	
Md.	Cumberland	11	3	---	6	1	---	---	1
Miss.	New Albany	20	14	---	2	1	3	---	
N.C.	Canton	19	19	---	---	---	---	---	
	N. Wilkesboro	38	19 + 19 Asst. Supt.	---	---	---	---	---	
Ohio	Athens	20	11	---	3	2		2	2
	Mt. Orab	7	2	---	---	---	---	---	5
	Piketon	22	16	---	1	1	1	1	3
	St. Clairsville	17	17	---	---	---	---	---	---
S.C.	Greenville	18*	6	---	2	---	1	---	9
Tenn.	Alcoa	17	7	7	---	---	---	---	3
	Cookeville	14	14	---	---	---	---	---	---
	Harrogate	11	4	4	2	---	1	---	---
	Johnson City	26	13	13	---	---		---	---
	Oak Ridge	13	8	---	4	---	1	---	
Va.	Norton	14	5	5	3	---	1	---	---
W.Va.	Martinsburg	13	8	8 (Alternates to Superintendent)	1	---	1	3	
	Morgantown	25	12	12 (but only Superintendent or Board Member votes)	---	---	1	---	---

* Two of these directors are also members of the LDD Board of Directors

an advisory committee to the LDD Board. While the LDD Board usually follows the advice of the advisory committee, deviations are possible. In at least one RESA previously operating through the local LDD, the lack of autonomy was considered to be a problem by the local superintendents and an independent RESA was established.

RESA Board with Sole Responsibility: Most RESA Boards do not share decision-making responsibility with any other group. Even in those states where the RESA operates an activity supported by state or federal funds awarded directly to the RESA, the Boards exercise sole responsibility for the RESA.

B. FISCAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE RESA WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Technically speaking, many RESAs do not actually receive funds, administer grant awards, or make disbursements. Instead, some other organization acts as fiscal agent for the RESA. Thus, many RESAs are intimately connected with another organization.

This section describes three types of fiscal agent arrangements used by RESAs, some of the changes in such arrangements that have occurred, and some perceived benefits and problems with each arrangement.

1. TYPES OF ARRANGEMENTS

In terms of their fiscal links to other organizations, RESAs fall into three categories:

Completely Independent: RESAs of this type are legal entities capable of acting as their own fiscal agent. The Cumberland, Maryland RESA is an example of this type of RESA.

Independent with Administrative Service Links Existing: At least nine RESAs utilize some other organization, such as one of the member school districts, as an agent for all fiscal matters. The link in some cases is by choice, but more often it is dictated by the fact that the RESAs do not have the necessary legal status to

receive and expend public funds. Examples of this type of RESA are: Norton, Virginia; the Ohio RESAs; and New Albany, Mississippi.

Component Organization: For at least a portion of their program activities, the Kentucky and North Carolina RESAs are considered regional offices of the State Department of Education. The State Departments of Education act as fiscal agents for those activities. These RESAs do not carry out regulatory roles of the state, but they do coordinate state activities and report on a monthly basis to state level personnel. The Greenville, South Carolina RESA is currently a component of the LDD (COG) staff and functions through the Human Resources division of the COG, which is its fiscal agent.

Table 5 summarizes the types of fiscal agents utilized by ARC-assisted RESAs. As can be seen from the table, many RESAs utilize more than one type of organization as a fiscal agent.

2. CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED

In general, most RESA directors contacted are satisfied with the fiscal arrangements that exist for them; in fact, some have found other arrangements unsatisfactory. A major issue concerning fiscal relationships with other agencies appears to be a need to ensure independence for the RESA within existing legal options and funding requirements. For example, at least two RESAs have reduced their dependence on their LDD. In one case, the RESA staff and local Board believed that the organization could have greater independence if it became its own fiscal agent and was directly authorized by the state legislature. In the other case, the RESA existed originally as a component of the Local Development District, but the superintendents on the Human Resources Committee (which was the RESA) of the LDD decided that, if they were to contribute funds to the RESA, they should have

TABLE 5: FISCAL AGENTS UTILIZED BY RESAS

		Self	Local Education Agency(ies)	State Office	LDD	Other
Ala.	Huntsville	✓				
Ky.						
	Ashland	✓		✓		
	Barbourville	✓		✓	✓	
	Morehead	✓		✓		
	Hazard	✓		✓		
	Prestonburg	✓	✓	✓		
Md.						
	Cumberland	✓				
Miss.						
	New Albany					✓ Itawamba Junior College
N.C.						
	Canton		✓	✓		
	N. Wilkesboro		✓	✓		
Ohio						
	Athens		✓			
	Mt. Orab		✓			
	Piketon		✓			
	St. Clairsville		✓			
S.C.						
	Greenville				✓	
Tenn.						
	Alcoa	✓	✓			
	Cookeville				✓	
	Harrogate	✓	✓			
	Johnson City	✓				
	Oak Ridge	✓	✓			
Va.						
	Norton		✓			
W.Va.						
	Martinsburg		✓			
	Morgantown		✓			

independent control over the organization. Thus, they established an organization separate from the LDD.

3. BENEFITS OF THE DIFFERENT FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Some RESA directors felt quite strongly about whether or not a RESA should be its own fiscal agent. Others were ambivalent.

The benefits identified with being one's own fiscal agent centered around the independence it affords from existing organizations that could in some way limit the RESA's activities, the capability to have closer control over the budget, and elimination of payment delays.

The benefit identified with not being one's own fiscal agent was the freedom from the odious tasks of detailed bookkeeping, writing checks, etc.

4. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Problems, identified by RESA personnel, with acting as one's own fiscal agent are:

- Cost: Most RESAs indicated that one or two people would be or are required to act as a bookkeeper.

  However, several RESA directors using another institution as fiscal agent felt a need to have their own bookkeeper anyway. They consequently believed that total costs associated with fiscal affairs could be reduced by eliminating the duplications.

- Cash Flow: Several RESAs claimed an inability to maintain needed cash reserves, since many payments follow delivery of services.

Problems identified with using another organization as a fiscal agent are:

- Cost: Many RESAs thought they could perform the service at a lower cost. At least three RESAs pay the fiscal agent a fee for the service. Payments are as high as $9,000 per year.

- Control: The fiscal agent legally exercises control over the funds and RESA employees. On occasion this has been claimed as a restriction on the RESA's capability to operate the agency as the Director or Board desire.

- Public Relations: The existence of each RESA depends on the cooperation and good will of local education agencies, but being a fiscal agent is unrewarding for a school district and it can lead to disagreements.

- Inconvenience: If the fiscal agent is not colocated with the RESA, coordination can become a problem. Travel time and incompatible work schedules may cause some inconvenience.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE STATUS OF STAFF

For administrative purposes, the RESA staff generally operates with direct lines of authority to the Executive Director or the manager of an activity area. In the smaller RESAs, all personnel typically report directly to the Executive Director. In the larger ones, the staff may be divided into several projects or programs, each with a manager who reports to the Executive Director. The staff relationships are informal, and everyone has easy access to the director.

The major differences from one RESA to another in staff organization pertain to the official status of the staff members. Four types of employee status discussed below are:

- State employee working out of the RESA,
- Local education agency personnel being coordinated through the RESA,
- Project staff working for the RESA, and
- Continuing employees of the RESA.

1. STATE EMPLOYEES WORKING OUT OF THE RESA

State Departments of Education usually have specialists available to

provide consulting and coordinating services to local school districts. Depending on the state, these personnel may work out of the state capital or in assigned geographical areas of the state. In the latter case, they may work out of their home or a special office in the designated areas. In North Carolina, Kentucky, and West Virginia, state personnel of this type work in the RESAs.

North Carolina: In most cases, the personnel (or at least their positions) pre-date the RESA and the assignment merely represents a change in administrative arrangements.[1] The state person reports to the RESA Director for administrative purposes, but for policy and subject area matters reports to the appropriate bureau or office in the State Department of Education.

The dual reporting/management system appears to function well; no major problems were reported. The state staff likes to have administrative details handled for them. They believe the effectiveness of their role is enhanced by working out of the RESA. They cite two reasons for this belief:

- the expertise of other state staff and RESA staff is readily available to them, and
- the RESA Director, who understands local problems more than a distant state administrator, maintains channels of communication which can be utilized when needed.

Kentucky: Kentucky has assigned some of its state employees to RESAs in a manner similar to North Carolina. However, vocational education personnel who were initially assigned to the RESA have been administratively separated from the RESA Director. The vocational education staff may be housed in the same facility as the RESA and participate in RESA activities, but they are not administratively responsible to the RESA.

West Virginia: West Virginia has made funds available to hire consultants in special education. Previously the state hired the consultants and they were responsible directly to the state, but now the RESAs are hiring consultants. Some RESAs are having a problem determining whether the persons filling the positions are responsible to state level offices or to the RESA. The one point on which all parties appear to agree is that the positions will not be used to exercise state regulatory functions.

1. In the North Carolina RESA visited during this study, seven of the thirteen staff members, excluding support staff, are in state funded positions.

2. LOCAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL COORDINATED THROUGH THE RESA

In several states RESAs coordinate or manage a particular service to school districts. In this capacity a RESA employee may be working directly with and actually supervising employees of a local education agency. Examples of this are the supervision of special education teachers hired by the LEAs with a supervisor working from the RESA. In such situations the LEAs delegate day-to-day management of some of their personnel to the RESA while technically maintaining responsibility for them. No major problems were identified with these arrangements. However, one RESA reported some initial resistance from classroom teachers to following the recommendations of RESA personnel providing professional guidance that did not come through the school system's chain of command.

3. PROJECT STAFF WORKING FOR THE RESA

RESAs frequently employ specialists for specific projects, either on a contract basis or as RESA employees, with continued employment dependent on continuation of the project. Demonstration projects operated with federal grants are examples of this type of project. While the project is functioning, the project staff report to the RESA director. The major problem identified with this staff arrangement is job insecurity.

4. CONTINUING EMPLOYEES OF THE RESA

Most RESAs have a core staff intended to remain stable over time. These include the administrative staff of the RESA and project personnel who can adapt to a variety of projects.

The minimal administrative staff of a RESA usually consists of an Executive Director and Secretary. Nearly half of the RESAs also employ an administrative assistant to the Director who has responsibility for a portion of the RESA's planning and development activity.

RESAs acting as their own fiscal agents also have some bookkeeping capability, but the resources allocated to this activity vary from one person working nearly 100 percent of the time on the task, to a secretary or administrative assistant for whom this task is just one of many. In the larger RESAs, the managers of various programs who perform administrative tasks often are considered part of the administrator's staff.

RESAs also attract personnel who can readily adapt to a variety of RESA projects; they become part of a continuing core staff whose titles and duties change periodically. Examples are staff hired as "planners" under the ARC grant who switch to special project grants as ARC funds decreased.

V. RESA RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

This chapter describes the various types of relationships RESAs have established with organizations, other than Local Education Agencies, which are concerned with planning or providing educational services. These types of organization are:

- Local Development Districts,
- Local human resource agencies,
- State Departments of Education, and
- Institutions of higher education.

The information in this chapter was obtained both directly, by asking RESA directors about such relationships, and indirectly, during discussions about various RESA programs and activities.

Most of the benefits and problems associated with such relationships, according to the RESA directors interviewed, are essentially the same, regardless of which specific "other" organization is considered. These benefits and problems are presented in the final section of this chapter.

A. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

Five different types of relationships between the RESA and the Local Development District (LDD) were identified:

No formal contact with Development District.

Although Regional Development Districts in the Appalachian states are supposed to coordinate planning in their regions, several RESA directors could identify no contacts they have with their local development districts. A few RESA directors with no formal contact nevertheless maintained personal relationships with LDD directors pre-dating their current positions as directors. Those directors occasionally met and discussed their respective organizations.

One RESA director said that if he were receiving Appalachian Regional Commission money, or if he had submitted any proposals requiring A-95 review, he would be required to have official contact with a development district, but presently he has none.

Development District as A-95 reviewer.

Development districts frequently serve as A-95 reviewers and as such must approve proposals for federal monies prepared by RESAs. This approval appears to be routine and no RESA director reported LDD questioning of proposals when proposal review was the primary relationship between the two bodies. It was suggested by one RESA director that the LDD should assume a more critical stance when reviewing proposals in order to avoid duplication of projects or activities in the Region.

RESA as education planner for the region.

A few Development Districts turn to the RESA for the education component of their comprehensive plan. At least one LDD asks the RESA to assist with A-95 review of education proposals, and some ask RESAs to run specific programs.

RESA as component of Development District.

The RESA in Huntsville, Alabama was originally the Human Resources Committee of the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments. The RESA director reported no problems with that arrangement, and in fact the RESA is still viewed by the Council of Governments as the education planner for the region. However, as ARC funding for the RESA decreased and the participating school districts were asked to contribute a large share of the financial support of the RESA, the superintendents decided they wanted complete control over the RESA. Although problems had never arisen, the superintendents saw the potential for problems if the LDD Board wanted to influence one of their programs.

In Greenville, South Carolina the COG has had an education planner and an education committee for several years. The State Department of Education wanted to organize a RESA independent of the COG, but that move was resisted successfully by the COG and the Governor. Finally, two years ago the education planning unit

of the COG applied for ARC funding for a RESA within the COG. The RESA director could identify no problems associated with their relationship with the COG.

The RESA in Cookeville, Tennessee was, until a few years ago, a component of the local development district. That RESA is currently housed in the Development District offices and uses the Development District as fiscal agent. The RESA director feels this relationship is ideal because the resources and advice of the Development District and its Director are readily available to him, but at the same time his RESA maintains its autonomy.

RESA and LDD representation on each other's Boards.

In nine RESAs, an LDD representative is a member of the RESA Board, and in at least one RESA the chairman of the RESA Board sits on the LDD Board.

Two issues concerning LDD-RESA relationships that are of concern to RESA directors are:

- The need to maintain the independence of education organizations from other groups, and
- LDD as an inadequate conduit of ARC funds to the RESA.

Several RESA directors seemed fearful that a closer relationship with their local LDD would mean attempts on the part of the LDD's Advisory Board, composed of non-educators, to dictate education policy. On the other hand, several RESA directors felt the local Development District should play a greater role in obtaining for the RESA more of the ARC funds allocated to their states.

B. OTHER HUMAN RESOURCE AGENCIES

Most RESA directors reported little or no interaction with local human resource agencies (HRAs) because no formal contacts, such as Board representation, had been established. However, RESA staffs could often identify

their working relationships with staffs of HRAs. Sometimes those relationships serve to bridge previously existing gaps not only between schools and HRAs but between HRAs serving the same target population.

Coordination between RESAs and HRAs has occurred in the following ways.

Human Resource Agencies represented on RESA Boards.

Seven of the twenty-three RESAs have HRA representation on their Advisory Boards.

RESA and HRA run joint program.

Cooperative arrangements are occasionally established in which at least one human resource agency works with the RESA. An example of such a program is the Preventive Health Services Program in the RESA of Cumberland, Maryland. In that program, RESA staff and Health Department staff form a team. Another example is the Psychological Services Program in Alcoa, Tennessee, in which the RESA provides psychological services for the local Head Start Program. Also, several RESAs have obtained grants from local manpower agencies for programs that either the RESA or a local school district operates.

Communication is established to avoid duplication of programs.

Many RESAs are providing services, such as those to handicapped children, which traditionally have been provided by Health or Welfare agencies. RESA programs are usually designed to reach a different population group than that covered by other agencies. Directors of such RESA-run programs have established contact with other human resource agencies to assure that the RESA program does not duplicate that of the other agency and to assure personnel in those agencies that the RESA program is not intended to take clients from the other agency.

RESA as coordinator of other agencies' services.

The role the Alcoa, Tennesse RESA plays in a regional Young Mothers Program is to maintain contact with the twelve agencies providing services to young pregnant girls. The RESA coordinates the services of those agencies and acts as liaison between them.

Some RESAs appear to have no contact or coordination with Human Resource Agencies.

C. INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

RESA directors identified several types of relationship between their RESA and local colleges or universities. Several RESA directors asserted that, prior to the existence of the RESA, the local school districts had little or no contact with higher education institutions; but, that as a result of the RESA role, an important bridge between the two groups had been established.

The following four types of relationships were identified by RESA directors.

Coordination of institution services.

In several RESAs the primary contact with colleges or universities is for in-service programs or coordination of courses. Some institutions of higher education offer courses for teachers in subjects which have been identified by the RESA, sometimes in connection with a specific RESA-run program. The role of the RESA is usually liaison with the institution, such as to arrange for a course to be taught in the region at a location convenient to the region's teachers rather than at a college campus.

Jointly run programs.

At least two RESAs have entered into collaborative arrangements with colleges and universities. For example, the Cumberland, Maryland RESA joined forces with a local college to develop a Small Business Institute which provides management counseling to small businesses and industries.

In the Athens, Ohio RESA the local University plays an important part in the cooperative purchasing program. Food supplies for participating school districts are purchased and distributed through the University.

Utilization of institution resources.

The RESA in Alcoa, Tennessee attributes some of the success of its Psychological Services Program to its close ties with the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. The program utilizes the services of graduate students in the Psychology Department. The arrangement

is beneficial to the RESA because the University is able to provide a resource which the RESA needs. At the same time the University benefits by having a program in which its students can receive practical experience.

Some RESA directors said that faculty members of higher education institutions often contribute their time for RESA coordinated workshops. Others identified universities (and colleges) as a source of consultants and resource materials.

Institutions represented on RESA Board.

Fourteen of the twenty-three RESAs have representatives of institutions of higher education on their boards. This arrangement permits exchange of ideas and information about the needs in the region.

D. STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RESA contacts with State Departments of Education range from no contact to extensive contact--the latter especially in states in which the RESAs receive support from the State Departments. Some RESA directors identifying no contact with the State Department of Education felt that the State Departments should be more helpful in informing them of programs which would be appropriate for the RESA and of monies available to the RESA.

Chapter IV, Section C, contains further discussion of the RESA relationships in the three states in which some RESA staff are funded by the State Department of Education.

The discussion below presents the relationships identified by RESA directors.

Liaison between state bureaus and local school districts.

RESAs in those states receiving state funding for operations and with staff supported by the state report frequent regular contacts with the State Department, usually meetings every month or two. In one state, Kentucky, the state-funded staff spend about 50 percent of their time acting as liaison between state bureaus and local school districts.

In West Virginia, the monthly meetings of RESA directors, to which a representative of the State Department of Education is invited, are viewed as a mechanism for channeling information between the State Department and LEAs. State Department officials are informed of LEA needs and solicit local superintendent input into program decisions through the RESA Directors. At the same time, State Department officials use the RESAs as channels for communicating with local school districts.

Contacts limited to bureaus funding RESA-run programs.

The RESA in Huntsville, Alabama maintains regular and frequent contacts with the Bureau of Adult Education in the State Department of Education because of the massive adult education program which the RESA coordinates.

State Department of Education representation on RESA Boards.

Thirteen of the twenty-three RESAs have representatives of State Departments of Education on their Boards.

E. BENEFITS AND PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

RESA directors associated similar benefits and problems with the different types of agencies identified above.

The benefits identified with establishing close relationships are the following:

- Those agencies can be sources of information on funding availability for RESA programs. The directors feel that continued contacts with those agencies can increase the likelihood that available funds will be awarded to the RESA.

- Those agencies can provide expertise to be utilized by the RESA in planning and implementing activities.

- After those relationships are established, some RESAs assist in closing communication gaps between existing agencies and between school districts and other agencies.

The problems identified with close relationships are:

- Those agencies may try to exert too much control over RESA operations. This fear was mentioned several times with respect to local development districts. RESA directors said that if RESAs are to be agencies whose function is to serve local school districts, then the local school superintendents should control the RESA.

- A similar problem was identified with respect to program operations. Liaison with other agencies in operating programs presents the problem that those agencies will try to exert too much influence over the program.

VI. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING RESA ACTIVITIES

The planning procedures used by RESAs differ, depending on whether the RESA is in its initial year of existence or in subsequent (operational) years. Figure 4 illustrates a process approximating the initial cycles described by most directors.

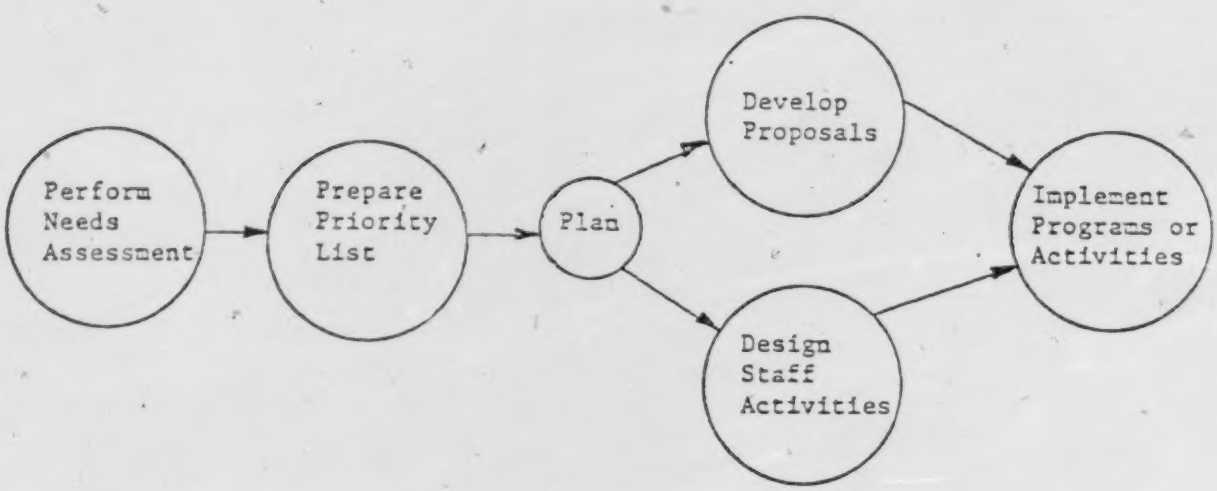

FIGURE 4

INITIAL YEAR PLANNING MODEL

The extent to which RESAs follow this process is discussed in this chapter. The variations that occur after the first year are discussed and illustrated with a revised design and implementation model from that given in Figure 4.

A. INITIAL PLANNING

All ARC-assisted RESAs were provided an initial planning contract to study how a regional organization could serve local education needs and to plan their organizational structure and operations. A needs assessment usually was conducted to identify and prioritize candidate areas of RESA activity. The technique used to conduct the needs assessment varied from a series of meetings of superintendents on the one hand, to formal surveys administered to people working in or utilizing the local education system, on the other. In a few regions, needs assessments had been conducted prior to the award of a planning grant to the RESAs and were not repeated during the year of planning. In other cases the assessment was performed by the State Department of Education.

The purpose of the initial needs assessments was to provide a large base of perceptions on which planning could be performed. The following are examples of needs identified through this process:

- Establish Instructional Resource Center,
- Start programs for talented and gifted children,
- Expand all programs for exceptional children,
- Adopt the team approach to vocational and general education planning,
- Establish cooperative driver education,
- Improve in-service education, and
- Recruit better trained teachers.

In some RESAs this procedure resulted in long lists of needs identified throughout the region. However, since school superintendents reviewed

and revised the results of the needs assessments, the final lists often strongly reflected their perceptions and interests.

After needs have been identified, RESAs select some or all of them as priorities and prepare a plan to identify and design programs to meet the stated needs.

B. SUBSEQUENT PLANNING

After the first year, assessments of needs are conducted primarily through staff liaisons with local educators and through input from the Board. In a few program or activity areas, formal surveys or a series of workshops have been held to document a need or formulate a work plan, but this approach is not used widely.

All RESAs appear to have the flexibility to go through a planning cycle at any time during the year. In fact, several RESAs, mainly those receiving state support, see planning as a continual process with new programs being considered throughout the year. The majority of RESAs, however, operate on a yearly planning cycle with formal plans being developed and approved at some point during the year. Different techniques utilized are:

Board and RESA staff retreat for two or three days to review needs, select areas of interest, review options, establish priorities, and prepare a plan.

RESA staff holds a series of meetings with the Board, starting with a presentation of needs and potential courses of action and proceeding through the development of specific proposals as the Board screens and selects certain priorities.

Staff develops and submits to the Board a draft proposal for a subsequent year of ARC funding under an operating contract. The proposal identifies major activities for the upcoming year and provides a vehicle for discussion, modification and approval of the plan.

The difference between the planning process after the first year and that shown in Figure 4 is that a new set of priorities is not necessarily established. Instead, the plan may be prepared by combining newly identified needs with original, but not yet met, priorities--but without establishing a combined list of priorities. Some RESAs, however, do establish a new complete set of priorities each year, based on the needs assessment. The mixture of possibilities is represented by Figure 5.

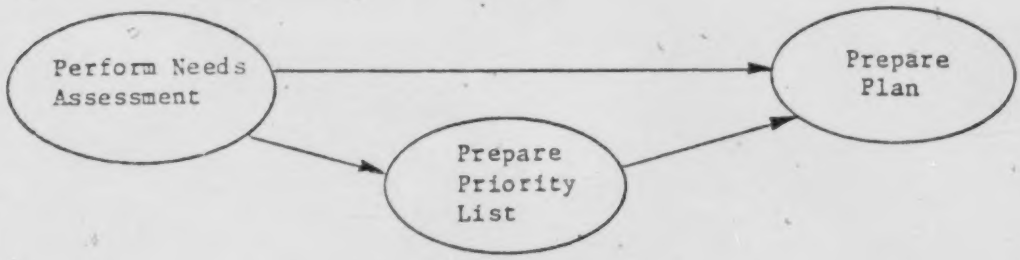

FIGURE 5

SUBSEQUENT YEAR PLANNING MODEL

C. ENSURING LOCAL INPUT TO RESA OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The primary purpose for RESAs to exist is to provide services for local education agencies. By their actions or statements, all RESA directors recognize that in order to provide useful services, local input to the RESA's operation is needed, both in the form of financial resources

and guidance. The ARC funding policy for RESAs forced some local input by requiring local match for the planning and operating contracts and by requiring some sort of needs assessments.

The ARC-assisted RESAs have subsequently developed several techniques to achieve local input in the form of guidance and cooperation.

- o Board of Directors Controlled by Local Officials

  Table 4 in Chapter IV displays the composition of RESA Boards. As can be noted, all Boards, except one, are dominated by local school personnel. At most, there are one or two on each Board that are not representative of a local institution or population. Most boards meet monthly, vote on all issues concerning RESA operations, and receive status reports for on-going activities. In this regard, they play a role similar to the school board of local education agencies.

  Nearly all directors indicated that the reactions of the board members was the primary means of determining if the RESA was functioning properly, and of receiving local guidance.

- o Advisory Boards

  Several RESA directors stated that the majority of the input to the RESA from their school systems is through staff working in an advisory capacity to the RESA board or staff. Nearly all RESAs have advisory boards for specific areas of activity.

- o Staff Solicitation

  RESA directors frequently see their main role as a liaison with the heads of local agencies. Some meet privately with school superintendents monthly and most maintain routine telephone contact. In this manner, they collect ideas, identify needs, and propose solutions. Similarly, the staff has frequent contacts within the school systems that provide a mechanism for determining the needs and wants of the LEA staffs.

- o Jointly-staffed Activities

  Some RESA services involve RESA personnel and local staff members working together on a project activity. This union of effort provides a mechanism for continual interaction and input to the provision of a service.

- Formal Surveys or Needs Assessments

  ARC planning grants require that needs assessments be conducted. Some assessments are performed through surveys of persons working locally in education. Others are done through a series of workshops and meetings with local educators. A few of the surveys are limited to meetings with superintendents. Typically, from the assessment, a list of priority areas for action is identified.

  Most RESAs operate on a yearly planning cycle which begins with the production of a budget and list of proposed activities for board approval. Once the initial needs assessment is conducted, many RESAs depend on one of the above approaches to update the original assessment and produce the yearly plan. In a few instances, formal surveys are conducted.

  Several RESAs have adopted techniques such as: each month review a service area; hold a yearly "board retreat"; or set aside one or more meetings for assessing progress and determining needs.

Local support is provided through in-kind services or financial resources, or by making materials and facilities available. The three methods used to obtain local financial support are:

- a flat fee for each participating agency,
- a per student assessment,
- a purchase order basis.

The financial contribution is the most difficult form of local support to obtain, and rarely goes above a few thousand dollars per school district, unless specific services are being paid for on a purchase order basis.

In-service contribution includes the time superintendents expend on RESA-related meetings and activities, LEA staff time when participating in RESA services away from their regular duties and support services provided by the school system. Several RESAs operate out of LEA buildings either at reduced rental rates or free. Charges for the use of the facilities typically are calculated as a contribution to the RESA.

Each of the above approaches can be useful and provide a mechanism for local input. At a minimum, the board of a RESA should be constituted and

function in a manner that will permit the local education agencies to monitor the progress of RESA activities, review proposals for future activities and provide input on the future direction of the RESA.

The easiest way to ensure full representation of all LEAs on the RESA board is to include a person from each, usually the superintendent, on it. However, some RESAs serve such a large number of LEAs that such a board would be too large. In those cases, most RESAs have established a system whereby adjacent school districts elect one of their superintendents to be their representative on the board.

Several superintendents and other board members indicated, through answers to questions on RESA activities or by specific statements, that they were not familiar with RESA activities. Thus, in order to obtain input from persons who are more familiar with RESA activities or familiar with areas of potential RESA activity, it appears necessary to have:

- advisory committees of LEA staff members to provide input on areas related to their expertise, and
- periodic surveys concerning performance of current services and needs not being met.

Financial input appears to be best handled by a flat assessment plus a user fee to cover the cost of services actually utilized. The flat fee, assessed for all member institutions, ensures a minimum commitment and increases the chances of active involvement of the institution. The user fee serves to distribute the costs more equitably among the participating school districts.

D. IMPLEMENTING RESA ACTIVITIES

After a plan has been prepared, that plan and four additional factors influence the activities in which RESAs engage. Figure 6 below illustrates these factors.

Availability of Funds: RESAs which depend for a large part of their support on program specific funding sources outside the local school districts can be influenced nearly as much by availability of funds as they are by superintendents' perceptions of needs. Information on available funds comes from many sources: State Departments of Education; Development Districts; ARC; other agencies funding programs in a RESA; and, to a limited degree, Commerce Business Daily and The Federal Register.

Requests from Someone Outside the RESA: A few RESA Directors have said that directors or staffs of human resource agencies, development districts, and other agencies will suggest or request that they utilize available money to run a specific program. For example, the RESA in Norton, Virginia runs the regional Agency on Aging and a nutritional program for the elderly at the request of the local development district.

RESA Staff Capability to Provide Services: Some RESA Directors and staffs design programs to utilize their own strengths in the belief that, since there are many needs in a region, selecting services on the basis of staff skills is as reasonable as any other method. For example, one RESA annually makes up a list of education programs for students that the agency's staff has the expertise to offer. The Board selects from the proposed options and the staff then prepares specific proposals.

Staff Assigned Functions: In North Carolina, West Virginia, and Kentucky the State Departments of Education have designated specific programs or responsibilities which are to be handled by the RESAs. North Carolina has assigned to the RESAs specific coordinators who act as consultants to classroom teachers. In West Virginia the state provides each RESA with money to hire a special education coordinator for the region, a position which previously was state controlled. The Kentucky State Department of Education has furnished each RESA with basic staff and funds with which the RESAs can supplement their staffs or spend on programs.[1] The state does not dictate functions that the RESA must perform, but it does specify that the primary avenue for some funds will be the RESAs

1. Recently, the state has discontinued this support. See Chapter III, Section E.

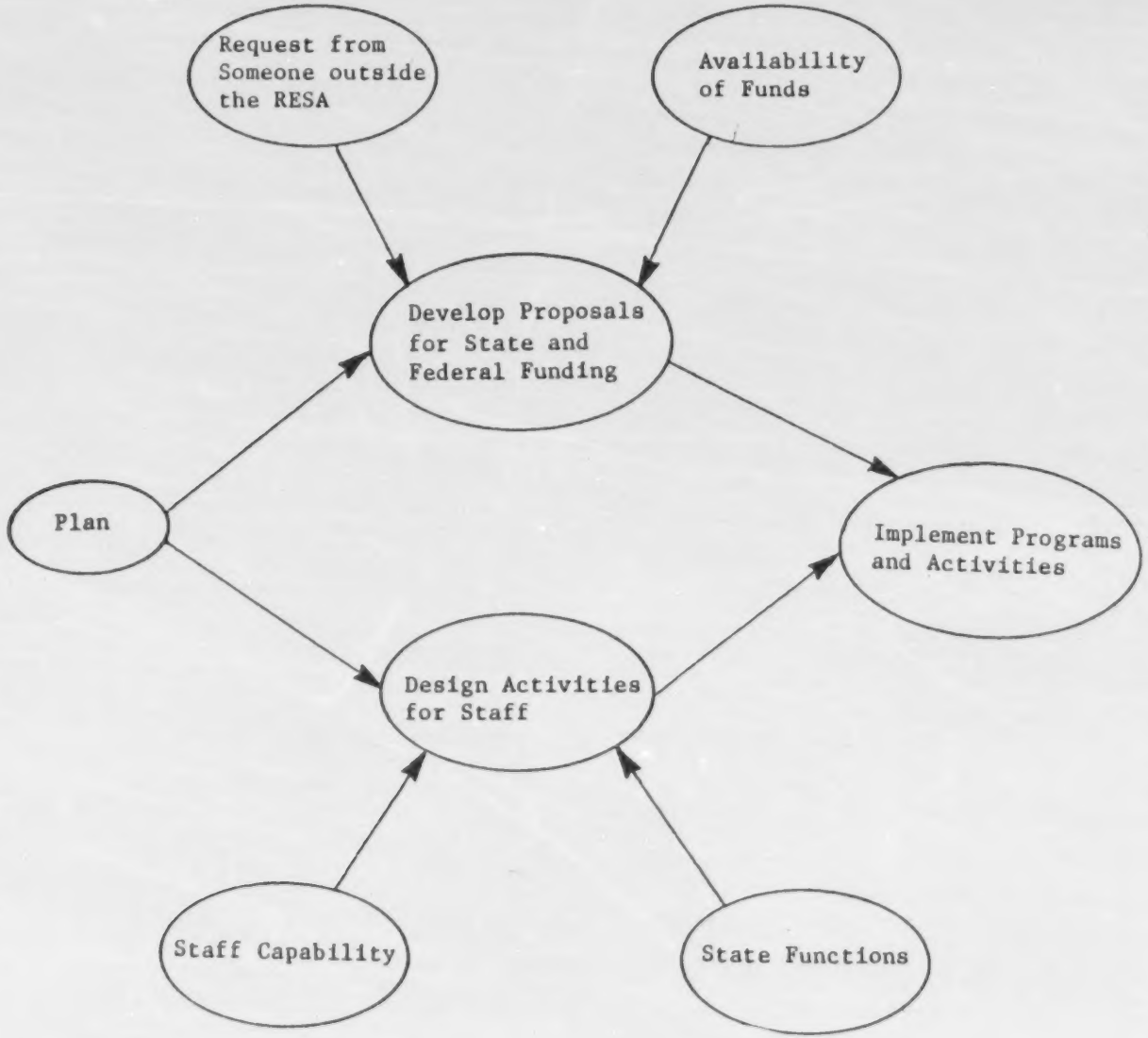

FIGURE 6

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

These steps in planning and designing programs ultimately lead to the activities in which RESAs engage.

The design of specific activities varies according to the activity and funding source. That is, once an activity area has been decided upon and funding assured, the RESA staff meet with personnel who will be involved to develop and implement a particular strategy. Examples are:

In-Service: Meetings with supervisors, teachers, and those who deliver in-service programs can occur over a several month period leading up to the sessions.

Cooperative purchasing: Sequential meetings are held with superintendents, purchasing agents, and bidders to agree on procedures, items on which bids will be solicited, and acceptable bidders.

Special Projects in Delivering Services to Children: Frequently the service delivery model is contained in the proposal used to obtain approval or funding (mainly from federal sources). The planning involves documenting that the model is applicable (e.g., target population present, required services not present but feasible, and available personnel to operate model), and then coordinating with local educators to operate the activity within their system and program structure.

The following chapter identifies the activities in which RESAs are engaging this year, the beneficiaries of those activities, and the ways in which RESA staffs are involved in the activities.

VII. REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCY PROJECT AND PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The purpose of this chapter is to characterize the RESAs in terms of the projects and programs in which they are involved. These activities constitute the services provided to member agencies and are the reason for the RESAs to exist.

The projects and programs are presented from three perspectives:

- The type of education activity being affected: By examining RESA activities from this perspective it is possible to identify those types of education programs which are appropriate candidates for RESA involvement.
- The type of beneficiaries: By characterizing the projects and programs by those persons or organizations being served it is possible to identify appropriate candidates for RESA services.
- The type of RESA involvement in educational activities: By organizing the RESA projects and programs by the type of involvement it is possible to identify the mechanism used to affect education activities.

For reference purposes, an attachment to this document contains a list by RESA of the set of current projects and programs that have been identified during this study and are used here to characterize RESA activities.

A. CURRENT PROGRAMS IDENTIFIED BY RESA DIRECTORS

All RESA directors were asked to identify the programs in which their RESAs are engaged this year. In most cases, the directors identified the programs with titles that referred to a specific type of education activity.

After discussing the programs with RESA directors and program directors, it became apparent that programs operating in similar areas of education are often identified with different titles in different RESAs and frequently involve different activities. However, the categorization of RESA programs by commonly referenced areas of education activity identifies those areas that have been appropriate for RESA involvement.

Table 6 classifies the programs which RESAs are currently operating according to 19 categories. Most of the categories used in the table are those by which RESA staffs identified programs (e.g. the five Adult Education programs were identified as such). However, in five cases we have grouped programs which appeared similar but were identified with different titles:

Special Education: Includes programs specifically identified as special education, programs for talented and gifted children, programs for exceptional children.

Management/Administration: Includes the facilitators in North Carolina, the Unified Pupil Testing Program in Maryland, and programs identified as helping administrators and managers with functions involved in operating a school system or non-institutional activities of a school system.

Aging: Includes Agency on Aging and nutrition program for the elderly.

Driver/Safety Education: Includes driver education, motorcycle safety and bicycle safety programs.

Parent Education: Includes home start programs and other programs aimed at augmenting the ongoing education of the parents' activities.

In some cases, a program could be placed in several categories. For example, one RESA is introducing a program into local schools which will utilize classroom teachers to screen their respective students for special education needs. The program is being introduced through a specially

TABLE 6: TYPE OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY RESAs

RESA		Number of Programs Identified	Appalachian Education Satellite Project	Special Education	Adult Education	Parent Education	Health Education	Career Education	Management and Administration	Occupational Education	Resource/Media Centers and Programs	Reading Mathematics	Humanities	Consumer Education	Cooperative Purchase	Inservice	Driver/Safety Education	Vocational Education	Early Childhood Education	Guidance	Aging
Ala.	Huntsville	4	1	1	1	1															
Ky.	Ashland	4										1		1	1	1					
	Barbourville	4		1					1						1	1					
	Morehead	8		2	1							1	1		1	1		1			
	Hazard	7		1	1			1	1			1			1		1				
	Prestonburg	3		1								1				1					
Md.	Cumberland	8	1			1	2	1	2				1								
Miss.	New Albany	6		2					3		1										
N.C.	Canton	12		2					4	1	2	1				1			1		
	N. Wilkesboro	10		1					3	1	1	1			1	1			1		
Ohio	Athens	6		2							1				1	1			1		
	Mt. Orab	8							2		5				1						
	Piketon				IN PLANNING YEAR																
	St. Clairsville				IN PLANNING YEAR																
S.C.	Greenville	3		1				1	1												
Tenn.	Alcoa	6		3								1					2				
	Cookeville	6		1	1							1				1	1	1			
	Harrogate	7	1	2		2													1	1	
	Johnson City	4		1					2						1						
	Oak Ridge	5		1							1						2	1			
Va.	Norton	8	1	3							1								1		2
W.Va.	Martinsburg	7		2	1	1			1								1		1		
	Morgantown	7		3					1		1				1				1		
	Total Number of Programs Identified	133	4	30	5	5	2	3	21	2	13	8	2	1	9	8	7	3	7	1	2
	Number of RESAs Identified with Programs	21	4	18	5	4	1	3	11	2	8	8	2	1	9	8	5	3	7	1	1

designed training program. Thus, the activity could be classified either as special education or inservice. Since the emphasis is on special education, it has been so classified. Conversely, a RESA coordinated series of inservice training workshops that cover a variety of subjects is classified inservice, since the emphasis is on the training.

Table 6 gives the number of distinct programs in each category in which RESAs are engaged during the 1975-76 school year, and identifies the number of RESAs involved in the programs. As can be seen from the table, the most active area of involvement is in special education, with 30 current programs identified in 18 RESAs. Management and administration related programs were identified 21 times in 11 RESAs, and 13 media or resource programs were operating in 8 RESAs. These three categories account for 64 of the 133 programs identified in Table 6. The other 69 programs in Table 6 are distributed over the remaining 16 categories, with between one and nine programs per category. RESAs seldom operate more than one distinct program in a category. However, 22 instances of a RESA involved in more than one program in a given category have been identified.

The diversity of RESA involvement in education activities is demonstrated by the distribution of programs across the 19 categories listed in Table 6. The diversity of RESA program activity is even more evident when one considers the diversity of programs within any category. This point is demonstrated in the following summaries of the program activity in four of the categories having nine or more distinct programs.

1. RESA SPECIAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Included in the special education activities are all programs that involve the education of children encountering some learning disability or physical impairments or classified as talented and gifted. At least six of the 30 programs that have been identified as special education are primarily classified as talented and gifted, with most of the remaining programs emphasizing the disadvantaged child.

As noted earlier, there is a great variety of special education activities taking place within the regions served by the RESAs, and the extent of RESA staff involvement in these activities sometimes varies within the school districts served by a RESA. Of the sets of activities clearly identified as RESA programs, three main types could be distinguished.

a. A RESA Staff Member Is a Coordinator of Special Education

In at least nine of the 18 RESAs identified as having special education activities, there was one or more staff members acting as a coordinator of special education activities. The title of the staff specialists varies; consulting teacher, consultant, specialist, supervisor, and coordinator are all used. Also, in several other RESAs, there is a consultant or staff member providing some specific special education activity who, on occasion, acts as a general coordinator or consultant in special education.

The special education coordinators in RESAs carry out a great variety of activities. These include the following:

- Conducting inservice training sessions for local teachers;
- Conducting or organizing conferences and workshops;
- Providing school systems and teachers with materials and literature on available instructional units;

- Providing schools and teachers with technical assistance, demonstrations of methods, and help in planning individualized instructions;
- Addressing public meetings;
- Assisting superintendents and principals in planning future special education activities;
- Assisting local districts in applying for outside funds;
- Monitoring special education programs developed by local teachers;
- Helping districts locate qualified special education personnel;
- Recruiting volunteers for special projects;
- Preparing curriculum guides;
- Helping school systems set up or improve procedures for testing, identifying, and referring children needing special education services;
- Developing or adopting model projects for use by teachers and school systems in the region;
- Conducting tests of designated children; and
- Assisting university students with training projects.

Generally speaking, it appears that each RESA special education coordinator is allowed to do any of these things, subject only to available resources and not conflicting with existing programs and policies. Coordinators do not have the time, skills, or interest to perform each activity extensively. The variations from one RESA to another seem to depend more on personal characteristics of the coordinators and local situations concerning existing services and policies than on any conscious design by the RESAs. Consequently, this model is best described by saying the RESA special education coordinator performs many of the activities listed above.

A few RESAs have defined programs consisting of a limited set of the above activities. They are classified here as the sub-programs of an education coordinator, although they could be implemented in a RESA independent of the other activities and without the presence of a designated staff specialist. One such program concentrates on conferences and consultation; the Southeastern Ohio RESA has such a program for talented and gifted children. Another separable sub-program is the materials and reference center. The Region 13 Kentucky RESA has identified this part of its special education activities as a separate program and plans to expand its center to include materials in other education areas.

b. The RESA Provides Psychological Consultation and Testing Services

A great many RESA Boards have acknowledged that identifying and referring children with special educational needs is a serious problem in their regions. At least one RESA, the Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative in Tennessee, has established a Psychological Services team to test children referred by the local districts. The testing itself is performed by university psychology students under contract with the University of Tennessee. As part of the arrangement, the students receive some field training from the RESA's psychological services supervisor.

At least four other RESAs have at least one person providing similar psychological testing and referral assistance, either by staff psychologists or consultants on a more limited basis, and several other RESAs claim they plan to provide such services in the near future.

c. The RESA Provides Instructional Services Directly to Students and Families

Several RESAs identify programs that involve the provision of services other than screening directly to students. In most cases, these are provided either for a low incidence problem or as part of a pilot and demonstration project for a limited set of students. In all cases, the number directly served is relatively small. One example of this type of program exists in the Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative. They have established a home-based instructional program for up to 70 preschool handicapped children. The services are provided by six home instructors who were recruited by the RESA from within the region. The RESA special education specialists provide the home visitors extensive assistance and training; a full day of inservice training is provided each week, courses are taken at a community college, and a consultant is available from the University of Tennessee. Clinch-Powell's planning and preparation for this program was extensive. It included hosting conferences given by personnel from Portage, Wisconsin, who had developed and implemented a similar program, as well as making visits to other preschool programs in North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Kentucky.

d. Nonprogram Activities

During interviews and in reviewing documents, several passing comments to RESA activities in special education that do not seem to be full-scale programs were identified. Nevertheless, while they do not appear to be major RESA activities, several examples are mentioned here to help round out the picture of RESA activities in special education.

- Region 11 RESA in Kentucky reported it "has been awarded" a classroom unit for education of the deaf. The local districts will be asked to nominate students, and the physical location

of the unit will be decided on the basis of the nominations. Available reports from the RESA give no other details of the activity as a RESA program.

- A report from the Southeastern Ohio RESA indicates that it was responsible for obtaining state funds to assist children with "low incidence" problems by combining the children in "three or four" counties to reach the minimum number required for assistance. To make use of the assistance, the RESA coordinated transportation for some of the children.

- Finally, the Director of the Upper East Tennessee Education Cooperative remarked that there are many different agencies providing services to handicapped children within the region, usually supported by one or another state program. Consequently, the RESA's special education activity so far has mainly consisted of attempting to begin coordination of the existing services.

2. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS

The management and administration category contains all those programs aimed primarily at administrators or those support programs not directly involved in an educational project. The two main types of RESA activity in this area are:

- Provide technical assistance and training.

  Five RESAs identified special programs involving workshops or inservice training sessions for superintendents and administrators. Topics covered in the sessions include discipline problems, legal questions, fiscal items, state regulations, and accreditation and assessment techniques. In three RESAs there is a staff person providing ongoing technical assistance and coordination concerning food service programs.

- Perform or coordinate the performance of a management or administrative function.

  Nine RESAs were identified as having programs that involved the performance of a management or administrative activity. These activities include:

  --providing computer support to school districts for class scheduling, maintaining records and comptroller functions. In at least one case, the RESA is establishing a computer center. However, in most cases the RESA acts as a coordinator in negotiating with a private or public institution that provides computer support for a fee charged directly to the school districts.

--operating or arranging for a unified testing program

-using a RESA staff to facilitate the dissemination of information on new programs for school districts and assist in the funding and implementation of such programs.

--Programs such as the cooperative purchase of supplies or the operation of media repair centers, although treated as separate categories in Table 6, could be considered administrative support programs.

In a broad sense, all RESA directors claim to be providing management and administrative support to local school districts by the routine performance of their jobs. The directors provide a resource that superintendents call upon to resolve problems encountered and, through meetings with the administrators, the directors disseminate information and technical assistance on a continuing basis. The programs categorized in Table 6 as management and administrative support refer to those cases where a separate activity beyond the routine tasks of the director has been organized by the RESA to provide some specific type of service to the local education agencies.

3. COOPERATIVE PURCHASE PROGRAMS

At present, at least nine RESAs are operating cooperative purchasing programs for common items routinely purchased by school systems. Table 7 identifies seven RESAs with cooperative purchase agreements and the major types of supplies purchased through them. A discussion of estimated cost savings of these programs is contained in the response to the ARC policy question on economy of scale savings realized by RESAs.[1]

1. John D. Waller, Dona M. Kemp and John W. Scanlon. "Supporting Analyses for an Assessment of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Regional Education Service Agencies Program." Paper 5048-4-02, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, August 16, 1976.

TABLE 7: TYPES OF
SUPPLIES PURCHASED THROUGH
COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM
1975-76

RESA	Major Types of Supplies Purchased
Ashland, Ky.	School supplies
Hazard, Ky.	Paper products
Morehead, Ky.	Insurance, paper, tires
N. Wilkesboro, N.C.	Food
Athens, Oh.	Food and school supplies
Johnson City, Tenn.	School supplies, food, maintenance supplies
Morgantown, W. Va.	School supplies, custodial supplies

As can be noted from the table, school supplies constitute the most common type of cooperative purchase. Within that category, paper supplies and duplicating supplies were the most frequently mentioned items. Food supplies constitute the second most common area of cooperative purchase. One RESA focuses on milk and bread, while another deliberately avoids milk. Only one RESA appears to provide a complete line of food supplies. Three RESAs obtain custodial supplies and one has been active in the areas of tires, insurance and coal.

The role of the RESA in most of the cooperative programs is that of a coordinator and administrator. In general, the RESA acts as a processor of bids. The principal tasks performed are:

- Survey superintendents to identify items to be considered for cooperative purchase.
- Develop specifications acceptable to participating superintendents.
- Obtain from superintendents estimates of amount to be purchased and desired bidders list.
- Submit request for bids to potential suppliers and process receipt and selection of bids.
- Inform school systems of selected suppliers and monitor the ordering process.

For most purchases, the school system places its own orders relative to the terms of the bid and receives the supplies directly. However, in a few areas, supplies are delivered to a central facility for subsequent pickup by the school systems. In those cases, the RESA has a distribution role which many have found unpleasant and costly. RESAs also exercise a quality control function on products delivered (e.g. send samples of coal to state university for testing to confirm the grade level) and followup on any contract disputes.

In order to make the process work efficiently and routinely, RESAs have developed standardized lists and forms for accomplishing the above task. One RESA has contracted the process to a commercial automatic data processing (ADP) firm that prints the list of potential items for superintendents to use in entering specifications, estimated amounts, and desired bidders. The firm then processes the information to produce bids which the RESA issues. Upon receipt of the bids, the ADP firm processes the bids to display the options available and issues order forms to the superintendents after the suppliers are selected. Once established on an annual ordering cycle, the RESA coordination of the program appears to require very little staff time. Estimates of RESA personnel requirements range from about 10 percent up to near 100 percent of one person's time, with the variation resulting from the type of tasks performed, length of operation of the system, and type and size of purchases.

The rationale for initially establishing a cooperative purchase program or for selecting certain items for cooperative purchase depends on a variety of factors involving:

- Determination of what the local priorities for a RESA should be (Some regions have decided to establish a program, but the Board wants the RESA to focus on other needs first.)
- Local purchase capabilities (Some RESAs found that they could not beat existing purchase costs or those available through a state organized bid.)
- Local purchase preferences (Several RESAs have encountered resistance from superintendents who want to use certain suppliers independent of cost. Frequently there is a desire to support local merchants who pay school taxes.)
- Ease of arranging delivery
- Confidence in the ability to actually achieve savings considered to be worth the effort
- Superintendents' perceptions of their capability to maintain control over basic administration functions involved in the purchase

These rationales were identified in regions having cooperative purchase programs and in those not having such activities. The extent to which local superintendents share some mixture of these concerns determines whether a RESA becomes involved in cooperative purchasing. If sizeable numbers of local superintendents are favorably disposed to the program, it is undertaken. In all cooperative purchase programs examined, at least one member school district did not participate due to some combination of the above reasons. However, in most cases, the participation tends to increase as the program begins to demonstrate cost savings and a capability to deliver acceptable services.

Only a few cooperative purchase agreements independent of a RESA could be identified; however, those that were identified demonstrate that a RESA is not essential to the process. For example, a few cases were identified of two or three school systems operating cooperative programs prior to the existence of the RESA, prior to the RESA involvement in the program, and in areas without a RESA. Also, many school districts (including those participating in RESA organized cooperatives) purchase some supplies through a bid obtained for all state agencies or in cooperation with local, noneducation agencies.

4. INSERVICE PROGRAMS

Eight RESAs identified programs involving the development and delivery or coordination of inservice training programs covering a broad spectrum of education topics. As described in the other categories of programs, a variety of programs focusing on specific topics utilize inservice training as a component activity. Those programs are not included here, since the training is merely a component activity and not the focus of the programs.

The inservice training programs include:

- workshops for all the teachers of the region which are held at a central location using experts from outside the area,

- a series of small workshops for selected teachers using RESA staff members, local education personnel or the staff of nearby institutions of higher education, and
- courses coordinated through local colleges and universities.

The Appalachian Education Satellite Project (AESP), which is an inservice training program utilizing satellites to relay televised training sessions into selected geographic regions, has been distinguished as a separate category in Table 6. The AESP is part of a program coordinated through the Appalachian Regional Commission and the U.S. Office of Education.

B. RESA PROGRAMS CATEGORIZED BY BENEFICIARIES

Most RESA programs are aimed at providing services to a specific target population that participates directly in the programs. Those target populations constitute the primary beneficiaries of the RESA activities and provide a measure of who the RESAs are affecting or at least attempting to affect.

The composition and size of the target groups vary between programs and RESAs, with extensive variation existing within any type of program or RESA. This point is demonstrated by examining the distribution of programs relative to seven different population groups: preschool children, inschool students, persons 6-21 years old but out of school, teachers, administrators, parents and adults. Table 8 shows the number of times each group was identified as a target population of programs operating in the 1975-76 school year. For some programs more than one group was identified as the target population, which accounts for there being more entries in Table 8 than the total number of programs examined.

The involvement of the RESA programs with each target population in Table 8 is given in Attachment B by program and RESA, and is summarized here.

1. PROGRAMS AIMED AT PRESCHOOL POPULATION

Eight programs were identified which directly provided services to preschool children. The magnitude of the involvement ranged from programs serving 38 children to one serving 2357 children. Through the eight programs aimed at preschool populations, at least 3160 children were identified as receiving services.

TABLE 8: TARGET POPULATIONS
FOR RESA ACTIVITIES

RESA		Number of Programs Identified for Distinct RESAs	Ages 6-21						
			Pre-School	In School	Out of School	Teacher	Administrators	Parents	Adults
Ala.	Huntsville	(4)	1	1			1	1	3
Ky.	Ashland	(4)				3	3		
	Barbourville	(4)				2	3		
	Morehead	(8)		4		3	1		1
	Hazard	(7)		1	1	1	3		2
	Prestonburg	(3)				3			
Md.	Cumberland	(8)	1	3		4	2	1	1
Miss.	New Albany	(6)	1	2	1	2	3		
N.C.	Canton	(12)				7	8		
	N. Wilkesboro	(10)				6	5		
Ohio	Athens	(6)	1			5	2		
	Mt. Orab	(8)		1		5	5		
S.C.	Greenville	(3)				2	1		
Tenn.	Alcoa	(6)		4		1			
	Cookeville	(6)		3		2	2		1
	Harrogate	(7)	2	1		3	2	1	
	Johnson City	(4)					4		
	Oak Ridge	(5)		4		1			
Va.	Norton	(8)	1	2	1	2	1	1	2
W.Va.	Martinsburg	(7)	1			4	1	1	2
	Morgantown	(7)		2		4	2		
	Total	(133)	8	28	3	60	49	5	12

Two of the programs focused on providing services to children classified as handicapped, one was a demonstration program serving a small portion of the region's preschool children, and four were attempting to provide services to the general preschool population.

2. PROGRAMS AIMED AT INSCHOOL POPULATION

Twenty-eight of the programs focus on the delivery of services to children in school. The programs range from providing services to seven children in a talented and gifted program to all students in a region that can receive instructional television programs arranged through the RESA. Nine of the programs involve over 1000 students, and nine serve less than 200.

Five of the programs involve talented and gifted children, and seven are classified as special education. In general, those programs tend to serve a limited number of students except when providing screening or testing services. Four programs involve courses in vocational education, and five are driver, motorcycle or safety education. One program involves the teaching of reading, and one involves the introduction of a health education program in the classroom.

3. PROGRAMS AIMED AT OUT OF SCHOOL PERSONS RANGING IN AGES 6 TO 21

At least three programs were identified as focusing on school age children and young adults who are not in school. These programs provide instructional programs to handicapped children unable to attend regular classes. One program serves 12 students; another 35. The third program that provides some service to this target population involves screening

and testing all children in the region under the age of 21 whether in or out of school.

4. PROGRAMS AIMED AT TEACHERS

Programs aimed at teachers constitute the largest class of programs when they are classified by beneficiaries. Sixty of the programs, nearly half, identified teachers as participants. Frequently, the programs also provided services to either students or administrators.

The major classes of programs in this category are:

- Workshops and inservice programs in which participation ranges from a few teachers in a workshop to all teachers in a region participating in a special inservice program.
- Technical assistance provided by subject matter specialist --reading, math, special education being the most common subjects.
- Resource centers and media centers that obtain and disseminate instructional materials to teachers.

Nearly half of the programs involve special education activities, with the remainder spread over a variety of subjects.

5. PROGRAMS AIMED AT ADMINISTRATORS

The second largest class, over one-third, is aimed at administrators. Nearly half of the programs are aimed at providing assistance or information to superintendents or supervisors. The other programs in this category are those in which the RESA actually becomes involved in an administrative or support activity that otherwise would be performed or directed by a staff member. Included in these "other" programs are: cooperative purchase activities, media repair centers, coordination of the introduction of new projects or programs, and development of planning and policy documents.

The primary mechanism for delivering services to administrators are:

- workshops and inservice programs,
- dissemination of materials, and
- a staff person who provides technical assistance or performs administrative and support tasks for the school districts.

6. PROGRAMS AIMED AT PARENTS

Five programs were identified that involved parents. The size of the programs ranged from 30 to 950, with a combined total of over 1300 parents involved. Three of the programs have components which work directly with the preschool children of the parents. The other two programs focus primarily on services for the parents.

All the programs are aimed at increasing the capability of parents to work more effectively with the learning process of their preschool children. The programs involve workshops, the dissemination of materials, and home visits by professionals or volunteers.

7. PROGRAMS AIMED AT ADULTS

Several RESA programs are either aimed specifically at serving adults or permit adults to participate in programs primarily serving students. As an example of the latter situation, one RESA provides driver education courses for adults through the facilities established for secondary school students. Also, one RESA includes adults in the target population for their talented and gifted program--"Talent Search."

Two RESAs were identified that arrange for or provide public service and other employment related courses for residents. Courses offered in the past were designed for firemen and small businessmen. Two RESAs operate

training centers for personnel from across the Southeastern United States planning to work in Homestart programs.

The most common adult oriented RESA activity is programs preparing residents to take GED tests. Five such Adult Education programs were identified that serve between 140 and 3000 students annually, with a combined total of over 4500 served. In at least two cases, the RESAs have become the primary providers of Adult Education courses in their respective regions. They offer courses and personal assistance to the students. In other regions, the RESA program complements existing ABE courses. For example, one RESA has organized a program utilizing paraprofessionals and a coordinator to provide ABE materials and training to approximately 350 homebound students through visits to their homes.

Two programs that are rather distinct from other RESA activities are those providing services to the elderly in the Norton, Virginia area. The programs are coordinated through the RESA and provide nutritional instruction, hot meals, and other assistance to senior citizens.

In summary, Table 8 and the above discussion demonstrate that the bulk of RESA programs identified serve either inschool students, teachers, or administrators. Within the school systems, the primary beneficiaries of RESA programs are teachers and administrators.

C. TYPES OF RESA INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAMS

Three principal types of RESA involvement in education related activities have been distinguished: provision of services; administration; and technical assistance.

1. PROVISION OF SERVICE

In at least 51 of the 73 programs identified as currently being operated in the eleven visited RESAs, the RESA staff or consultants are directly involved in the delivery of services to the programs' target populations. Examples of these programs are when RESA personnel:

- give tests to screen and diagnose for special education programs,
- give workshops to children, administrators or teachers,
- operate resource centers, libraries, and repair facilities, and
- conduct needs assessments.

These types of program generally require a sizeable budget and staff for the RESA, and involve obtaining access to federal or state funds or having LEAs pay for services provided on an "as used" basis.

In a few cases, the RESA is operating the program for demonstration purposes.

In providing the services, three situations are encountered:

- The program involves a selected portion of the region and is being operated for demonstration purposes. Continued operation of the program or expansion of it to the entire region would not be expected to be through the RESA. Talented and gifted programs aimed at demonstrating specific models are examples of this type program.
- The RESA service is a one time activity that is designed to enable others to operate some programs independent of the RESA. An example of such a program is the provision of a special training course for teachers aimed at giving them the capability to

operate a career education program in their respective schools. Once the training is complete, the RESA is not involved.

- The service can be expected to be operated by the RESA on a continuing basis. This situation is usually encountered when either:

  (a) the target population is quite small--e.g., classes for deaf children,
  (b) the service is provided to a larger target population but on an infrequent basis--testing for related disabilities, and
  (c) specialized services or equipment are involved which can easily be transported to those utilizing them or those utilizing them can readily be transported to the services--e.g., bicycle safety and media repair facilities.

2. ADMINISTER OR COORDINATE A PROGRAM

In 15 of the 73 programs identified as currently being operated in the eleven visited RESAs, the role of the RESA is primarily as an administrator or coordinator. The bulk of the program activity is being carried out by the personnel working for other organizations.

Examples of this type of activity are:

- Cooperative purchasing programs in which RESAs perform some of the initial coordinating tasks but ultimately the purchasing and delivery arrangements are made between the suppliers and the local school districts.

- The Morgantown, West Virginia RESA acts as a conduit for the local school systems to combine their resources and arrange for specific educational television programs through a station operated by a local college. The program services are the responsibility of the contractor.

In the first example, the RESA staff person becomes actively involved in the substance of the activity. Whereas in the second example, the RESA is primarily acting as a fiscal agent or contract administrator with program details being worked out between the education agencies.

RESAs appear to assume this administrative role in those cases where:

- a new program is being introduced into the school systems that will require some initial coordination between the systems, and
- cost savings or program improvements can be realized in programs involving school systems and outside contractors by having one agency coordinate the contract, but the systems receive services under the contract on an individual basis.

3. PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Most RESAs are viewed as a source of expertise that is utilized by local education agencies to help resolve administration and educational problems and facilitate the operation of ongoing programs. In the 11 RESAs visited, all executive directors stated that school superintendents in their RESA call upon them for selected problems and utilize them for technical assistance. The frequency of utilization ranges from receiving at least one request per month to several per week.

In several RESAs, the staff identified programs operated by local school systems for which they routinely provided technical assistance, and identified that assistance as a program activity of the RESA. Examples of these situations are:

- The program coordinators in the North Carolina RESAs
- Driver education programs in the Cookeville, Tennessee region are operated on a cooperative basis by the local school systems through an administrative structure independent of the RESA. The executive director has particiapted in the effort, however, by providing technical assistance on planning and implementing the program.

Of the 73 programs in which the eleven visited RESAs were identified as being involved during 1975-76, the involvement appears to be primarily one of technical assistance in six of them.

VIII. THE OBJECTIVES SET BY AND FOR RESAS

This chapter describes the types of objectives set by individual RESAs for themselves as well as the ARC objectives for the RESA program. The performance information needed to test for achievement of the objectives is described and assessed. Some observations on the achievement of objectives are included, although this subject is treated further in "An Assessment of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Regional Education Services Agencies Program."[1]

A. RESA OBJECTIVES

There are two sources of information concerning the objectives of individual RESAs: (1) interviews with RESA Directors and members of RESA Boards and (2) available documentation. These will be discussed separately because, even though the types of objectives cited by both sources are similar, the appropriate measures of achievement are somewhat different.

1. TYPES OF OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES IDENTIFIED BY RESA DIRECTORS

When asked about the objectives of their RESAs, the directors identified three types of objectives:

- o Strategic--which identify the role the RESA perceives for itself and the types of change it expects in the region;

1. John D. Waller, Dona M. Kemp and John W. Scanlon. Paper 5048-5, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, July 27, 1976.

- o Operational--which identify areas in which RESAs hope to implement programs; and
- o Cost effectiveness (identified often but not defined).

a. Strategic

The most frequently identified objectives of RESA directors were strategic. Examples of this cype are:

- o "To achieve educational improvements which can best be achieved through joint actions."
- o "To improve the scope, quality and access to educational opportunities...and to provide a model for replication in the state."
- o "To bring resources of others, especially State Department of Education and institutes of higher education, to bear upon problems of local school districts."

When asked about their measures for determining whether they meet objectives such as these, RESA directors usually gave one of two responses: either they didn't know whether they were meeting them, or they felt the continued support of the local superintendents or their Board was an indication that they were meeting them. Using the latter measure, RESAs would have to be judged as achieving the strategic objectives.

The strategic objectives are stated in such general terms that determining achievement becomes a subjective judgment on whether the activities undertaken are adequate. For example, many RESAs have an objective like "to bring resources of others, especially State Department of Education and institutes of higher education, to bear upon problems of local school districts." This objective is technically achieved if the RESA involves personnel from the state or an institution of higher education in local problems. Since 16 of the 23 RESAs studied have representatives of the state or higher education institutions on their board, they automatically meet the objectives. Of the remaining seven RESAs, two are

components of state agencies and the other five either operate programs in cooperation with higher education institutions or have representatives on an advisory committee.

Given the current statement of strategic objectives, the continuing support of local decision makers does in fact appear to be the most appropriate measure of achievement.

b. Operational

RESA directors also stated their objectives in terms of areas in which they hoped to implement programs during the year. Examples of this type of objective are:

- To work with the State Department of Education and the local schools to provide in-service programs for teachers and principals;
- To continue a Title III reading program; and
- To provide in-service, career education, consumer education, cooperative purchasing and teacher assessment services for the local superintendents.

The implementation and levels of activity achieved during the year are the main identified measures of achievement for these objectives.

With few exceptions, operational objectives identified during the interviews were ones that were already being met as a result of on-going program activity in the area of interest. The exceptions involved a few large programs that had recently been unsuccessful due to funding problems (one involving a regional computer and several involving the loss of various federal RFP competitions).

When pushed to identify programs that the RESA had at one time wanted to implement but had not (i.e., to identify operational objectives that had not been achieved), most RESA directors could identify several program areas. The primary reason for not succeeding was the inability

to secure funding for the program. However, at least two RESA directors identified situations where after further study, an operational objective had been abandoned as a result of lack of continuing interest or a change in priorities.

c. Cost Effectiveness

In view of the ambiguity of the term "cost effectiveness," particularly when applied to educational services, RESA directors who cited cost effectiveness as an objective were pressed to define measures for it. Few had measures readily available. Basically, it appeared that most had in mind simply reducing the costs of performing specific functions. The primary example cited is cooperative purchasing. Several RESAs with cooperative purchasing programs have conducted cost analyses showing that substantial cost savings were realized.

For programs other than cooperative purchasing, only a few RESAs had evidence suggesting that a cost reduction had been achieved by conducting the program through the RESA. For the great majority of programs there is no comparative information of sufficient detail and accuracy to judge whether costs have been reduced through regionalization.

2. OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED IN REPORTS PRODUCED BY OR FOR RESAS

The primary sources of documentation about objectives and achievement are the annual application for funding and the final reports which RESAs submit to ARC. All RESAs that have received planning or operating grants from ARC (twenty-two) have been required to produce evaluation information on the achievement of their objectives. Some RESAs have hired

a third party to conduct an evaluation of their operations, but most have prepared the report on their own.

The documented RESA objectives fall into the same three categories as those identified by RESA directors:

- o strategic,
- o operational, and
- o cost-effectiveness.

The remainder of this section provides examples of those objectives and the measures used by RESAs to report on their success in meeting them.

a. Strategic

The strategic objectives identified in documents such as reports to ARC are stated in terms similar to those used by RESA directors during interviews. The documented measures of achievement usually consist of examples of activities.

Examples from RESA reports are:

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE
o Encourage communication among the local school districts.	o The RESA is viewed as a vehicle to promote communication and school district participation as a demonstration that those school districts "were looking for an easier way to communicate with each other."
o To continue to bring resources of other organizations, particularly State Departments of Education and institutions of higher education to bear upon the problems of participating districts.	o A log of "in-kind" services received is used to show that the RESA has been able to secure extensive assistance from other agencies. Additional examples are given.
o To plan and coordinate regional organizational projects.	o No measures given.

b. Operational

Although RESA directors identified strategic objectives most frequently, RESA reports documenting achievement focus more on operational objectives.

Examples of operational objectives in RESA reports are:

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE
o RESA shall provide technical assistance in contract negotiations.	o "In-service programs have been prepared to meet this objective."
o RESA shall implement a system for cooperative purchase of school buses and gasoline.	o System to purchase buses has been established and it is anticipated that approximately forty-five buses will be cooperatively purchased. Because of the current gasoline shortage, the cooperative purchase of gasoline is not feasible.
o To enroll a minimum of 1,600 adults in an Adult Education program.	o An enrollement of 2,600 persons exceeded the set objective by 63 percent.
o "To provide special education consultant services including, but not limited to, in-service education, on-site visits, evaluation and hands-on-experiences in working with the exceptional child."	o Number of people served, specific costs per teacher, administrator, student or other unit, specific results, and similarly detailed facts and figures.
o "To plan and develop a vocational education program to hire and train the disadvantaged to serve as family aides; and to provide a career ladder for paraprofessionals."	o Description of the components of the program that has been developed.
o To establish a music education program.	o Unable to proceed because of lack of funding sources.
o Develop Drop-out and Juvenile Delinquent Prevention Program.	o It was felt that other educational agencies were providing the needed services and therefore the RESA did not develop a program.

To determine RESA success in achieving agreed-to objectives of the type just described, the final reports of RESAs have been reviewed. Table 9 displays the achievement of a sample of three RESAs relative to operational objectives. As with those identified by Executive Directors, the documented strategic objectives appear to be automatically fulfilled --in a technical sense by the operation of the RESA, and in a subjective sense by its continued existence under the sponsorship of existing institutions.

Similarly with the operational objectives, achievement most often equates to implementation of the activity. As indicated in Table 9, the success rate of RESAs is high. Those instances in which an objective of operating a program was not achieved were generally attributed to a lack of funds.

Cost effectiveness objectives primarily involved cooperative purchasing activities aimed at reducing costs. Documentation provided with final reports indicate achievement of the cost objective, at least for those programs.

B. ARC OBJECTIVES

Based on interviews with ARC staff and policy makers, three major objectives for the RESA program were identified. Those objectives and the success of RESAs in meeting them are discussed below.

Objective I: To provide the mechanism for the provision of selected education activities on a regional basis.

All RESAs studied, except the two still in their planning year, are providing education activities on a regional basis. Most of those RESAs,

TABLE 9

ACHIEVEMENT OF OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES: THREE RESAS

	Operational Objectives or Task Identified	Success? Yes	Partially	No	Reasons for Not Achieving
RESA I	1. Cooperative purchasing program	✓			
	2. Preventive maintenance systems			✓	No interest on part of superintendents.
	3. Other administrative services		✓		Some not feasible.
	4. Transportation systems		✓		One not feasible; still studying some.
	5. Computer services	✓			
	6. Instructional Resources Center	✓			
	7. Services for handicapped	✓			
	8. Project development communication services	✓			
	9. Early childhood	✓			
	10. Talented and gifted	✓			
RESA II	1. Music education program			✓	Lack of funding source.
	2. Drug abuse education training project	✓			
	3. Regional supervision for special education	✓			
	4. Coordination and preparation of place for instruction			✓	RESA ready but no one requested help.
	5. Practical arts application program			✓	Awaiting funding.
	6. Handbook for school administrators	✓			
	7. Public opinion survey	✓			
	8. Health services			✓	No reason given.
	9. Library program		✓		Planning in-service for librarians; unable to find funds for materials.
	10. Driver education program			✓	Lack of funding source.
	11. School bus safety film	✓			
	12. State price contract purchasing				Unclear.
	13. Publicity efforts	✓			
	14. Administrative service and coordinating functions	✓			
	15. Vocational education				Unclear.
RESA III	1. Early childhood education program	✓			
	2. Home start	✓			Of the forty-one process measures identified, thirty-four were accomplished, two were partially accomplished, one postponed, and four couldn't be measured yet.
	3. Special education services	✓			
	4. Vocational and career education	✓			
	5. Staff development programs	✓			
	6. Business services	✓			
	7. Communicating component	✓			
	8. Planning and development	✓			

14 of the 22 funded by ARC, have continued to provide such services after termination of ARC operating funds. Thus, the mechanisms have been established and continue to operate and provide services and activities. The attachment to this document identifies the programs operated by or assisted by RESAs during 1975-76.

Objective II: To upgrade education activities in a region with new programs and improvements in existing programs that are appropriate to a particular area but not likely to occur without regionalization.

At least half of the programs or activities in which RESAs are engaged this year are new. RESA directors and their staffs identified several ways in which RESA involvement in a program area resulted in improvements in the area. Among those improvements which we were told would not have occurred without RESA involvement are:

- Increased coverage
- New curricula
- Improved speed of services

Superintendents also were asked whether their RESA provided any services or programs which were otherwise unavailable to them. Nearly 90 percent of the superintendents interviewed said they thought their RESA was providing them with services or programs they would be unable to provide to their own schools. The reactions to RESA provision of programs included the following:

- Individual small school districts don't have enough students to justify the expense of some programs, e.g., voc ed, special education.
- Individual superintendents have neither the time nor resources to pursue and operate specialized programs.
- Programs operated regionally can be broader in scope than those operated by individual small school districts.

- Provision of state services by locating state personnel at the regional office enables school districts to take advantage of those services more frequently and more quickly than if each district had to individually contact the state office.

Seventy-five percent of the superintendents interviewed said changes had been made in their school systems as a result of RESA programs. Those changes include:

- Local assumption of funding of programs which were federally funded when operated by the RESA.
- Introduction of new or revised curriculum.
- Introduction of changes in teaching methods.
- Introduction of local programs modeled after RESA demonstration programs.

Objective III: To introduce or provide for specific education activities, including:

technical assistance and activities to improve the quality of multi-jurisdictional education planning and services;

activities and programs to improve the quality and quantity of teachers in the region;

activities and model programs in early childhood education, career education, and education manpower;

activities and programs to improve occupational information guidance and training; and

efforts to maximize effective use of financial assistance from other federal, state, and local sources.

The extent to which RESAs achieve this objective is reflected in the type of programs offered by the RESAs which were covered in the previous chapter. In general, RESAs have achieved this objective with approximately 80 percent of the program activity aimed at improving the quantity or quality of education opportunities for local residents. RESA achievements on specific types of educational improvements are discussed further in "An Assessment of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Regional Education Service Agencies Program."

1. John D. Waller, Dona M. Kemp and John W. Scanlon. Paper 5048-5, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, July 27, 1976.

IX. CONTINUATION DECISIONS

There are three major types of continuation decisions concerning RESAs and RESA activities:

- o Expansion of RESA concept to other regions,
- o Continuation of individual RESAs, and
- o Continuation of activities in which RESAs are involved.

This chapter discusses those three types of decisions and presents some evidence concerning how the decisions have been made.

A. EXPANSION OF RESA CONCEPT TO OTHER REGIONS

Since ARC began funding RESAs in 1970, RESAs have spread through the Appalachian states. Three sources of funds appear to have been used to start RESAs:

ARC,
state, and
local.

- o ARC has continued to fund new RESAs each year. As recently as July, 1975, two RESAs in Ohio received their first ARC planning grants.

- o State funds to support RESAs have been provided in North Carolina, West Virginia, and Kentucky. ARC has provided administrative support to two RESAs in North Carolina, two in West Virginia, and four in Kentucky. Subsequent to the provision of support to those RESAs by ARC, decisions were made in each of the states to provide state support to the RESAs. Now each of those states is covered with a network of RESAs--eight RESAs in West Virginia, eight in North Carolina (three of which have not yet established permanent offices), and fifteen in Kentucky[1]--and administrative support is provided out of state budgets.

1. The number in Kentucky may change after June 30, 1976 when the state withdraws its support.

In Virginia, Tenessee and Alabama, RESAs have been started without ARC or state support. Such RESAs were not a focus of this study and we have collected no information about them.

B. CONTINUATION OF INDIVIDUAL RESAS

As noted earlier, all ARC-assisted RESAs have continued to operate, at least through January 1976. Funding sources often have changed over time, but the organizations have continued.

ARC decisions to continue funding have been somewhat automatic barring any major RESA deviations from previous funding agreements.

State level decisions to fund RESAs appear to be policy decisions based on the State Superintendent's attitude toward the concept and the state legislature's willingness to approve funds for them.

- In North Carolina the State Superintendent endorsed the regional education agency concept in 1968, but it was not until after ARC provided initial funding for two RESAS in 1971 that the state legislature approved state funds to operate RESAs.
- Kentucky has authorized funds for RESAs through June 30, 1976. Concurrent with a change in state superintendents, a decision to discontinue state use of and funding for RESAs was made.[1]

Local decisions to continue to support RESAs appear to be based on the satisfaction of superintendents with the RESA. Decisions to discontinue ARC funding earlier than necessary have been based on a mixture of dissatisfaction with ARC procedures and the availability of other funds.

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1. Local superintendents and RESA Executive Directors in Kentucky lobbied with the State Superintendent, the Governor and the appropriate legislative committees, but the policy change was sustained. The basic argument of the Superintendent's office was that the same "state" services provided through the RESAs can be provided just as well without the current regional structure.

C. CONTINUATION OF ACTIVITIES IN WHICH RESAS ARE INVOLVED

RESA directors identified very few programs which were terminated because of dissatisfaction with program operation or program results. A cooperative purchasing program in one RESA was terminated when agreement on items to be purchased could not be reached by participants. The only programs identified for which funding was discontinued by a federal agency were those such as ESEA Title III programs that had reached the end of a natural funding cycle and were no longer eligible for refunding.

State agencies occasionally discontinued funding of a RESA-run program, but unsatisfactory program results were not given as the reason.

Most RESAs continue to operate programs after they initiate them if funding is available. When RESAs decided to discontinue their involvement in a program, the reasons most often given were:

- The program was only supposed to last for a year or two. Personnel have been trained and/or materials developed or curriculum designed, and they are now being utilized by the participating school districts.
- Local school districts individually or cooperatively (usually two or three districts) have picked up funding, either with their own funds or, more often, with available state funds, e.g., psychologists and other special education specialists.
- Federal money ran out and no other available funds were sufficient to continue the program.

X. CONCLUSION

This document has presented a description of ARC's RESA Program. The document covers the funding, operations, and objectives of twenty-three RESAs operating in the states of Alabama, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Virginia.

These RESAs are quite distinct and each has unique characteristics. In order to highlight what appear to be the significant variations among these RESAs, they have been described in terms of a common model developed in the first phase of this study. For each event in the model, the major variations exhibited by the ARC-assisted RESAs have been identified and assessed.

Some general points that can be made on the basis of the information that has been presented are:

- The RESA concept has grown and become established in Appalachian states concurrently with ARC funding assistance.
- RESAs exhibit a variety of funding patterns; both in sources of initial funding and in sources of support as ARC funding is reduced. Some RESAs demonstrate the capability to obtain a sizeable commitment of local funds; others demonstrate the opposite. Some obtain sizeable state or federal funds; some obtain very little from state or federal agencies.
- Success in obtaining funding from various sources appears to be more a function of prevailing local and state attitudes and circumstances than a reflection of RESA performance.

- While state legislation may affect the legal status and organizational arrangement of RESAs, the lack of legislation does not appear to be a significant impediment in the development or continuation of RESAs.

- RESAs often work with other existing institutions (i.e., LDDs, human resource agencies, institutions of higher education and state departments of education) and frequently establish formal relationships with them. However, except for relationships with state departments of education and institutions of higher education, there is often a reluctance to place too much emphasis on those relationships for fear of losing the LEA focus of the RESA and the freedom to do what local superintendents believe is most appropriate.

- Planning and selection of activities to be undertaken are most often determined by the perceived needs of LEAs and availability of funds.

- Activities of RESAs focus on elementary and secondary education but exhibit a great deal of variability.

- Determining achievement of objectives primarily involves positive assessments by LEAs and verification that planned activities are in fact implemented. On both of these criteria, RESAs have a high degree of success. Cost effectiveness studies are limited primarily to cooperative purchase programs (which appear to represent significant cost savings for participating LEAs).